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There is one exception—which proves the rule. In Kutigi all the members of the chief's family are addressed as *waci*, 'Great Ones', and though not shown special reverence are regarded somewhat as a class apart. The explanation is this: the rulers of Kutigi come from an alien group, those Bornu immigrants to whom I have referred already. Owing to their economic and educational advantages (they were Mohammedans in a pagan and rather primitive country) they had established themselves as the dominant group, and the leaders of the immigrants became the political rulers of the original inhabitants. In this position they were confirmed by the *Etsu* Nupe. In the Fulani dynasty of Nupe the Benu had an example close at hand how an alien group could arrogate to itself the position of a hereditary ruling caste. They followed it in every detail: from the Fulani kings they adopted the salutation *waci*; and like them they managed that the recognition of social superiority was extended not only to the actually ruling chief but to his whole kinship group—a whole hereditary ruling class. 622 565 554

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Let us try, in conclusion, to define the specific nature of the political unity achieved in the Nupe village. It must be emphasized, first of all, that it is a specific unity, and that it is achieved by mechanisms peculiar to itself. In other words, political organization is not—as is the case in many primitive societies—simply absorbed by religion, magic, or kinship, and the mechanisms of control which these domains of culture entail. Nor is it, on the other hand, possessed of any of the conspicuous instruments of political control which characterize other societies: a police or military executive, a disproportionate chieftain power, or an elaborate apparatus of coercion. Moreover, the connexion between political control and religious and kinship agencies is very close. Political organization delegates to the kinship system the important task of providing the executive organs for the community in the persons of the *nūsaši*, who, as we have seen, are village elders and family heads in one. And religious beliefs and practices supply the spiritual sanction of chieftainship and authority in general. But as important as these specific contributions of religion and kinship are certain less specific influences, by means of which both religion and kinship help to sustain the system of political control. Thus encouragement of intermarriage within the village community adds the strength of interlocked kinship relations to political ties; and the communal religious rites exercise, and underline in their own impressive fashion, the unit of the village group.¹ They do it consciously and openly: their dedication to the support of the village community expresses itself in the prayer formula which occurs in every religious ritual whatever its avowed purpose or the occasion of its performance: *edi u de lafiya*, 'may the village prosper'. Political control, kinship, and religion thus define coextensive social units. Only because 621 182

¹ This interdependence of political unit and religious congregation is analysed more explicitly in the case of the *gummi* cult. (J.R.A.I., lxxvi, 1937, pp. 91-130.)

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182 of this coextensiveness of the spheres of religious and political control could the village elders of Kutigi to whose 'strike' we referred above effect that political adjustment by religious pressure. And again only because of this coextensiveness of the spheres of political and kinship control could, in another instance, a family head be excluded from the ranks of the titled elders on the grounds that one of his sons had twice been caught thieving. The family head was identified with the moral standards obtaining in the kinship group the headship of which would have entitled him, in the normal case, to a position in the political executive. 'How can a man who cannot keep order in his own house,' said my informant, 'keep order in the village?' But these three agencies of control are only three in a multiplicity of coextensive forms of social organization: economic pursuits, the contacts of everyday life, recreation, education. The political activities take place within this one area of common life. Expressed in one formula: the political system and the closely knit social life of a single community organize an identical human substratum.

Here we may, in parenthesis, touch upon the theoretically interesting question whether this system of 'multiple control' which the political organization is capable of utilizing can be taken to explain the absence, in the case of the Nupe village, of the more conspicuous specifically political instruments of control. However, this question cannot be solved on the basis of Nupe material alone. For here the issue is confused by the fact that the state organization, superimposed upon the village system, obviates the necessity of the more essential of these instruments, especially with respect to legal and military executive. Indeed, the fact that the state removes graver legal cases from village jurisdiction releases the social system of the village from certain social pressure which must otherwise have necessitated a more strongly marked specific political authority.

621 This brings us to the question of the resistance of this delicately
622 balanced system of multiple control to outside influences and, generally,
182 the influence of change. Its efficiency is clearly a function of the uniformity of social interests obtaining in the community. It will fail as soon as the closeness of community life is broken by a strong divergence of interest. Extraneous changes creating new aims which are apt to dissociate the political executive from the rest of the people may disturb its equilibrium, which could then be readjusted only by a corresponding strengthening, at the cost of the other agencies in the multiple machinery of control, of political power as such. The most radical adjustment of this kind is that brought about by the modern political changes which, in accordance with the system of Indirect Rule, have turned the village chief into an official agent of the Administration. In this capacity he may have to give orders, enforce laws, and exact actions unpopular with his people. He is bound to stand for aims and interests which may threaten to estrange him from the community. An inconsiderate Administrative Officer may still more widen the rift. Twice I have come across chiefs who, in their official capacity and by the order of a District Officer, had to forbid all dances and festivities in a district which was

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behindhand with the tax, at a time when he should have organized, as chief, the village rituals that precede the harvest.

As long as a chief in his capacity as a paid official of the N.A. organizes common labour for road-work—the value of which the Nigerian peasant is soon coming to realize—the capture of a criminal, or certain obvious hygienic practices, he will be backed by public opinion. But when enforcing an unpopular tax, pressing children for the Government schools (which was frequently enough the case a few years ago), or—a case I witnessed myself—sentencing to a fine in accordance with some ambitious by-law a man who had been defecating on the public road, his authority no longer serves the accepted common interests and can no longer reckon with common approval.¹ Here the backing by the Administration must provide the extra power which is to weigh the scales in favour of the chief and to reset the political balance between chief and community. Here and there the Administration even felt compelled to replace a traditional chief, who proved incapable of carrying out the tasks which his position under the N.A. assigned to him, by a more willing or more enlightened man, possibly one who had had the advantage of education and could thus better see the 'white man's' viewpoint.² But this solution was not an unqualified success: Government backing was not capable of making up for the loss of the moral unity which supports the traditional chief in the execution of his traditional duties.

The case of the present chief of Jebba Island is an illuminating instance—although here the Administration is only indirectly responsible for the departure from the traditional rules of chieftainship. After the death of the last *Gebba*, who was said to have been a rather inefficient Village Head, a complete outsider was appointed as chief, a stranger who had been living for some time in the late *Gebba*'s house and had been acting for him as semi-official messenger in his dealings with the District Head at Mokwa. It was on the advice of the District Head that he was made the new Village Head. The District Head, himself a stranger who did not know the local situation, preferred to have a man he knew for his subordinate, and a man who had been to the Government School and who was, incidentally, a Mohammedan like himself. Elders and 'king-maker' were not consulted. The village elder who would have been appointed chief if the latter had had their way held at the time the title *Wangwa*. He set up something like an independent rule of his own. Except for official business—tax-collection in particular—the people ignored the other, shadow chief, completely. An unhealthy situation arose and was left to exist for two years, during which time there was no real authority in the village, and legal offences and unruly conduct in general were increasing rapidly. In 1935 I had the opportunity of drawing the attention of the Administration to this fact. The man *Wangwa* was recognized officially as a 'second-in-command' and prospective

¹ This case happened in a community half Yoruba and half Nupe. The progressive chief was a Yoruba, the victim (who came to me to complain) a Nupe. I could, in fact, hardly imagine a Nupe chief to be sufficiently appreciative of hygienic principles to take such a step.

² This happened twice, in Jebba Island and Sakpe.

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621 successor to the chieftainship (it being thought inadvisable to depose the
 622 once appointed chief). At the same time the elders promoted him to the
 182 highest village rank next to the chief's, *Tsadú*. Having been granted this
 responsible position in the village government, the ex-rival of the chief
 seems prepared to use his influence and moral power in support of the
 official Village Head whom he may succeed some day.

This book cannot venture to answer the question how far the authority of the traditional chief can be strained without alienating him from the people and the elders, or without forcing the latter to abandon their role as free spokesmen of the community and become mere pawns of the chief.¹ But it must be said that in many respects the adoption of new governmental duties by the traditional chiefs is proceeding smoothly and efficiently. This readjustment seems due less to political measures as such than to the comprehensive effectiveness of culture change, which gradually diminishes certain divergences in the views to which the political executive is committed and those of the people themselves. Already many Nupe villagers appreciate medical help and education, and are sending their children to school without pressure from the chief.

For completeness' sake we must add that the balance of 'multiple control' may be endangered also by the opposite development, namely a separation between political executive and community in which the latter represents the new extraneous influences. For individuals or sections of the community may dissociate themselves from the unity of common life, alienated by modern education, new economic enterprise, or conversion to Christianity, and may thus no longer be amenable to the traditional authorities. However, this danger has not yet arisen in the Nupe village, chiefly because the 'progressive' elements flock to the town rather than stay in the village, and also because Christian influence is inconsiderable.

621 Yet it would be a mistake to assume that the factors that weaken the
 622 homogeneous village community are all of recent date and the results
 182 of modern colonial development. Disturbances of the 'balance' very
 631 similar to those just described, and like them entailing a strengthening
 from outside, as it were, of the chief's authority, were also at work in the
 pre-British Nupe kingdom. They are embodied in the very existence of
 the kingdom as a political and social superstructure which is the carrier
 of new values and new, manifold, cultural influences.

First the purely political factors. We have heard of the insignia and emblems of chiefly power which, according to tradition, were bestowed on village chiefs by the ancestor-king of Nupe; the most ancient form of

¹ It is possible that in communities in which the 'multiple' system of control is less delicately adjusted, and the political authority of the chief more independent of the other principles governing community life, the political power of chief and elders can be used more freely for new tasks. This adds, I think, a new meaning to the following statement by Sir Donald Cameron: 'The Native Authorities Ordinance also makes provision for the limitation in particular instances of the powers which may be exercised by a Native Authority, for some of these are well organized and experienced while others are of . . . weaker mould.' ('Native Administration in Nigeria and Tanganyika', *Journal of the Royal African Society*, xxxvi, Supplement, p. 13.)

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village chieftainship is thus thought of as an office held 'by the grace of the king'. I have also mentioned that the appointment of the village chief is subject, to-day as of old, to confirmation by the *Etsu* Nupe. The chief thus becomes the official representative of the king, responsible to him for law and order and the collection of tax, but also able to rely on his sovereign's spiritual or political support. The people of the village can appeal to the *Etsu* if they are dissatisfied with their chief, and in the case of rival claims to chieftainship the king would be called upon to decide between the claimants—a role which he did not always undertake impartially; bribes offered by a chief threatened with the loss of his position or a new claimant would easily influence his decision.¹ The control of the king over his chiefs is expressed already in the ceremonial of the appointment. The chief-elect, accompanied by the head elders, would be summoned to the capital to receive his appointment and to be vested with a gown, turban, and sandals as insignia of his office, in a ceremony which closely resembles the investiture of officers of state or members of the royal nobility. The *Etsu* Nupe may also be called in to arbitrate in internal disputes, e.g. over the succession to local ranks—we remember the example from Doko. Lastly, legal cases come under the jurisdiction of the *Etsu* and his appointed agents, thus removing from the orbit of the community the right to see offences punished and retaliation achieved.

Another source of 'disturbance' lies in the impact of Islam. It led in many cases to a spiritual separation of chief and community, for many chiefs embraced Islam (at least nominally) long before the rest of the people. Thus these chiefs can no longer organize, and rarely even show interest in, the traditional religious ceremonies which weld the community into a single congregation. Nor can they base their authority, hereditary or not, on that spiritual commonness of which it was once an expression. They rely instead more or less openly on the closer association with the Mohammedan rulers of the country with whom they now share the creed—at least one feature of their exalted position. In its ever-increasing scope of proselytizing, Islam drives the wedge of another class distinction into the structure of village society. The distinction between Mohammedans and pagans in a village often has this effect, that the two sections differ not only in religious observances, but also in general mode of life, dress, important food habits (Mohammedans do not drink sorghum-beer, the traditional ceremonial drink of the Nupe peasants), their—often imaginary—educational qualification and, again, in the degree of the affinity they could claim to the highest social stratum in the country.

In other spheres of life—economic, educational—similar influences are at work, striking at the very roots of social homogeneity. But we may cut short our description; we shall meet with these influences again later. Our present discussion has established the main facts. For at least a century and a half the Nupe village did not exist in that self-centred, secure isolation in which the balance of its social system could fulfil

¹ Bribes to the *Etsu* are said to have played an important part in gaining the assent of the king when the new chiefs of Doko usurped the chieftainship.

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itself ideally. Through the person of its head, first of all, the village organization is bound to duties towards, and linked with the fate of, the wider political organization—the kingdom. Through religious, economic, and educational factors which follow in the wake of political absorption the one-ness of community and political organization which proved the essence of the village society is finally broken. The communities themselves, their areas of integrated social life, are broken open and forced partly into a system of integration, under the dictate of a concept of social unity which is part of the centralized political system of the state. I say 'partly', for the latter has to some extent left intact the social identity of the village. This is not meant only historically, but refers to the relation and actual inter-penetration of two essentially different social systems. Nor does it refer merely to a distinction between political autonomy of the village, or certain villages, as against political domination by the kingdom. One may perhaps speak of a partial autonomy of the villages under or within the kingdom, but the essential point is the different solution of the problem of political integration in one and in the other case. We have met with the analogous difference when we discussed the two different systems of political unification evolved by the two sub-tribes Kyedye and Beni. Let me formulate it again: it is the difference between an organization growing out of and utilizing the potentialities of uniform culture and common life, and an organization relying on the extraneous machinery of political control; between a political integration which remains true to the concept of Community, and an organization which forces unity upon diversity of culture and common life—the State.

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adopt, even more eagerly, the religious practice of the higher and highest classes, Mohammedanism. This is not 'real' social mobility; it serves only to blur the border-line between the strata. It involves attachment to a higher stratum only in the sense of external closeness and assimilation. 565

The assimilation achieved is irregular and of very unequal significance. Yet it is prompted by a definite motive running through the whole society—self-enhancement. The readiness of groups to identify themselves culturally with the representative stratum reveals an incentive to overcome that heterogeneity of cultures and groups in which we have grasped the essence of state structure. Potentially, this incentive may carry forms of cultural reorientation capable of wielding more intensive, more real, commonness. To examine how and how far this potentiality is utilized by the political system is to examine the crucial problem of this discussion: the dynamic relation between political integration and the heterogeneous raw material out of which it must fashion its unity.

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What then is the specific apparatus of control by means of which this heterogeneous society, severely divided by gulfs of culture, ethnic extraction, community, and class, maintains itself as a unit? And to what extent does it draw into its orbit and use for its own support these other non-political configurations and spheres of social life? When examining the political organization of the Nupe village from this viewpoint we discovered that there the basis of political control is extended to its widest possible limit: political organization utilizes the integrative forces of community life at large; it organizes into a unit what is integrated into the same unit by every existing institution. It might very well seem from our foregoing analysis of the Nupe state that here we have the exact opposite. A state machinery which concentrates political power in the hands of a small *élite* and ignores—save in order to transform into class barriers—tribal and cultural identity, seems committed to the narrowest system of political control: by coercion and physical force. 642 182

However, this section will show that such conclusions would be incorrect. One might, on general principles, reason that no state could afford to rely solely on coercive measures; and that it would rather utilize coercion only as a 'short cut' to bring about sentiments which, 'once established and sanctified, . . . may well flourish without compulsion, glorified as loyalty to a sovereign king or a national flag'.¹ A state that would disdain to call to assistance these bonds of inner unity seems to jeopardize continuously its safety, and to risk being shattered and broken up by unrest and revolts, possibly beyond repair. Such tension and unrest seems indeed characteristic of the political history of Nupe. But the historian would have to point out also that with all these grave disturbances Nupe kingdom yet maintained itself as a unit. Even when the Fulani took over the rule, testing most severely an already strained

¹ R. Lowie, *The Origin of the State*, 1927, p. 117.

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182 political structure with the additional weight of alien rulership, the state did not break down but on the contrary appeared to have taken out a new lease of life.

Now we shall be able to prove the existence of strong trends of integration which form within the political unit, incidental to it or fostered by it, and which, bridging over cultural diversity and the rift of social and economic inequality, endorse in their fashion the unit wrought by political control. However, in our search for these 'binding forces' of more subtle and conciliatory type we shall discover that they do not all point the same way. They are indeed 'binding' forces—but what they tend to bind and draw together is not invariably the same group substratum.

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602 We must examine first a significant negative instance—kinship. Kinship has no part in this integrative scheme, either ideologically or factually. No attempt is made to invest the conception of the state with that fiction of genealogical or kinship unity which is linked with the concepts of the sub-tribe and the village community. With the increased freedom of movement which is one of the results of political unification kinship relations become more widely scattered and marriage between distant localities is increasing and is regarded more and more as normal; but these new kinship relations draw only a patchy, irregular pattern that can have little influence upon the integration of the people at large. Moreover, kinship relations are often subordinated to political interests; patronage and the adherence to political factions may even break up family units. The widest gulf, between rulers and subjects, and between the *elite* culture of Bida and the peasant sections, is bridged only by the sociologically less significant form of intermarriage between men of the upper and women of the lower classes. We shall see later that full intermarriage is rigidly restricted and rendered specially difficult, unless it follows already existing political ties of patronage. We shall, in fact, have to speak of a definite class endogamy among the ruling classes. Marriage and kinship ties thus cement the solidarity of the component groups of the state, not of the state itself.

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642 We continue our search in the economic field. Political unification carries in its wake expansion of economic co-operation and interdependence. Economic areas were re-designed in accordance with the new, wider political unit and its centre of gravity, the populous capital, which depends for food and supplies on the agricultural districts. But the contribution of this widened economic co-operation to national solidarity is negligible if not wholly negative. In this reorientation of economic links the boundaries of the state have frequently been crossed and disregarded: trade became 'international'; craftsmen, traders, and even peasants are always ready to seek profitable new markets outside Nupe, and even to emigrate for the sake of better business prospects. Economic interdependence and co-operation even introduce new conflicts and forms of antagonism which set group sections against each other. We shall speak of the village artisans who openly admit (and partly resent) the competition of the superior Bida crafts. In times of crisis conflicts of this kind tend to become more strongly marked. During the depression of 1934-5 I could notice distinct resentment on the part of the peasants

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against the people of Bida, on whom they were dependent for the marketing of their produce, and whom they now held responsible for the disastrous fall in prices.

Legal-unification goes a step farther. Dependence upon a common forum of morality evokes a certain group cohesion, a common orientation of mind at least in that all the component groups will share common hopes—and fears—and a common interest in whatever affects the judicial organization. If we can test the strength of economic co-operation by the facts of volume of trade and traffic and the relation between productive and consuming areas, we can test this moral reorientation by examining the measure of interest which the various groups evince in legal change. I shall show later how keenly the people everywhere in Nupe follow changes in the law. But I shall also show that this interest, all the more intense because such vital issues are involved, does not invariably foster the dissemination of true, or reassuring, knowledge: often it spells suspicion and fear of a biased jurisdiction and legislation. Whole sections feel themselves tricked and threatened by this dangerous law and reject co-operation with its agents and the groups which it seems to favour.

Dynastic and political changes engage the attention of the people no less strongly. When the late Emir died and a new Emir was appointed, and when the appointment of the highest royal ranks was to take place in Bida, the events elicited comments from many groups from which one would not have expected such interest in 'higher politics'. One day I was standing in a Bida street, talking to a brass-smith, when the *Kpotū*, one of the disappointed claimants to the throne, rode past. The brass-smith looked after him, shook his head, and said to me: 'It must have been a great shock to him when someone else was appointed *Etsu*.' In Kutigi, the district of the *Kpotū*, the older men knew all about the rumour of the *Kpotū*'s illness, which had been given out in Bida as an explanation or excuse for his not having been promoted to a higher rank. And in Mokwa, the district of the *Rani*, the elders told me with amusement of the abortive attempt of their District Head to obtain promotion by supernatural intervention: how he had gone to Rabá and prayed at the tomb of Mallam Dendo for the success of his political aspirations.

'Unity of interest' in this sense obtains also with respect to all things that affect the people, and the news of such events would travel fast from place to place. In March 1936, at a Bida wedding feast, I happened to hear girls sing a song the words of which sounded unfamiliar to me. I found it to be a new topical 'stanza' which referred to the activities of the Sleeping Sickness Commission which even then was working in eastern Nupe, i.e. Agaie or Dibo country. The song gave voice to the suspicions and fears of the people and their anxiety to escape, by whatever means, the unpopular treatment. The song runs as follows:

The needle is coming,

The Mallam of the needle,

The father of threading.

O let me go.

And not only for my money [i.e. also for pity's sake].

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The needle killed the men of Dibo,
And also the men of Baro [a town in that district].
O father, save me and let me go.
If you must use your needle,
Do not let it bite me.

The 'needle' is the injection needle, and the 'Mallam of the needle' the native medical assistant who was performing the injection and who, according to the testimony of the song, could be bribed to spare the patient the (very painful) injection. The testimony, incidentally, was true; some time later I learned that one of the native medical assistants had actually taken bribes from the people, and had been apprehended not long after I had heard the song.

182 To summarize: political co-ordination calls into being a co-ordination
642 of interest—actual interest units—which in certain respects overcomes
the heterogeneity of tribe, culture, and even class, and includes the whole people. Yet as economic co-operation goes its own ways, often disregarding political frontiers, so the other forms of 'reorientation' may tend to further the formation of new, even antagonistic, groups rather than to cement the political unit. The 'interest units' are, paradoxically, units that spell disunity. The paradox is easily solved: the common interests round which these units are focused are such that they show a different aspect and portend different things to rulers and ruled, or to adherents of different political factions. The units which they create may efface tribal and cultural divisions, and temporarily even the barriers of class: but in critical moments they will only put forth more forcibly the existing disparities and forms of antagonism.

We turn, then, to another group of integrative factors which seem to succeed where the interest units fail. They wield integration which endorses unconditionally the political unit. The secret of their success lies in that they attempt unity and integration in spheres in which the political interests suffer such integration to exist, and in which the divergent political interests are overcome by some stronger incentive to unity.

182 The study of the unity which the Nupe state has achieved, or is achiev-
642 ing, reveals the effectiveness of two main groups of such incentives. To
26 formulate them tentatively: one is self-enhancement—especially a self-
enhancement that (in the language of psycho-analysis) 'sublimates' the humiliating experience of political dependence and inferiority; the other, the appeal of the mystic and supernatural. The first incentive reveals itself in the progressive identification of the people with the cultural values typical of the social elite; the second, in their readiness to adopt new myths and embrace religious beliefs and practices, which are vessels of political 'propaganda' at the same time. The two incentives may join forces, self-enhancement being offered in the realm of religion—as in the spreading of Islam, the religion of the rulers and conquerors, among the subject groups of the kingdom. We can also discern the agency of a third incentive, more unspecific and subsidiary in nature, which, as it were, canalizes the influence of the other two, namely, the

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appeal to an historical (or quasi-historical) turn of mind. I have already called the Nupe an historically-minded people: here is another bit of evidence for this bent. We shall see presently how under its influence ritual emblems become relics, and self-enhancement takes the form of exaltation in past glories.¹

Self-enhancement, then. These are the historical facts: the Nupe state has bound its many groups and peoples to its own fate, made them share its adventures, its conquests, the fruits of its victories and defeats. But the element of compulsion behind this commonness of fate disappears in its mental reflection. The commonness of fate is lifted up into the sphere of things eminently glorious and desirable. The people are eager to identify themselves with the kingdom and its fortunes, and share in a collective pride that ignores the social and cultural distance between rulers and ruled. Even the wars which deprived the Nupe of their own rights, chiefs of their independence, peasants of their wealth and land, become a cherished heroic memory. I was discussing the role of strangers in Bida with old Ndakotsu, one of my great friends, and I asked him whether there had been any Kamberi, Kamuku, or Gbari among the strangers who visited Bida regularly. Ndakotsu, last descendant of the Beni town-kings of Bida, who never became quite used to the idea that the *goiŋi* (Fulani) had robbed him of 'his' town, said ironically: 'Kamuku and Kamberi? Yes, but only as our slaves'—the 'our' evidently meaning a Nupe which credited to itself the successes of its Fulani rulers. When I first came to Mokwa my informants first of all showed me proudly the historical places near Mokwa where some of the battles in the wars of the Fulani against the usurper Umar Bahaushe had been fought, and insisted on describing them all in detail, as if this were the most important thing I had to learn. This did not prevent them later on from complaining bitterly about the tyranny of the Fulani and their indifference to the fate of the people.

This new, proud consciousness of a unity which embraces the whole kingdom is kept alive by every song telling of old times and every story relating the adventures and feats of the kings of Nupe. With fashions and cultural practices, songs and stories spread from the capital throughout the country. The songs composed in honour of the king or one of his noblemen by the drummers of Bida find their way into all the bigger villages of the country. In Mokwa I heard a song which had been composed in Bida in 1918 in honour of Etsu Bello's first motor-car, the first motor-car in the country. I put this song in here as an example not of the force of poetic expression which it possesses (in spite of the uncongenial topic), but as an example of its efficient 'propaganda for the kingdom'.

¹ There exist also certain other subsidiary stimuli, such as aesthetic appeal, which we may disregard here. One may put the question whether these various stimuli are to be regarded as universal or as peculiar to the culture which we are studying. More comparative material is needed to answer this question finally. However, one can fairly safely say already that the appeal of the supernatural is a universal trait of the human mind, while the appeal to self-enhancement, and still more so the appeal to historical appreciation, differs in effectiveness in different cultures; it is eminently typical of Nupe culture.

Song of Etsu Bello

- 182 The name of Allah is the beginning of all learning.
 643 Let us speak of the day when *Etsu Bello* bought a motor-car.
 539 On the day when *Etsu Bello* bought a motor-car,
 186 The whole of Bida went out to build a road.
 Younger brother and elder brother, they went out to build the road.
 All the people on the farms went out to build the road.
 The young bride, she went to build the road.
 The bridegroom, he went to build the road.
 But why did they all go out to build the road?
 It was because *Etsu Bello* had bought a motor-car.
 Because of that all people went out to build a road.
 They said: Let us build a road on which the car can travel.
 Then the man who wants to go to Badeggi, in this car he will go.
 And Zungeru, the man who wants to go to Zungeru, in this car he will go.
 And Wuya, who will travel to Wuya, in this car he will go.
 The man who will go to Jima, in this car he will go.¹
 The man who will go to Kacha, in this car he will go.
 The man who will travel beyond the river, in this car he will go.
 Thus he will go, they said, and therefore let us make the road.
Etsu Bello has the money to buy the car,
 But the car will benefit all the people of Bida, from the farms and from the city,
 The great man and the servant.
 They thank *Etsu Bello* because he bought the car.
Etsu Bello, who has horses, and who now has a car,
Etsu Bello can say: Though the horse may break his legs,
 We shall go all the same.
 On the day when *Etsu Bello* bought the motor-car,
 The bottles of the glass-makers turned into red beads.
 And the kernels of the gombara grass became necklaces.²
 In that year when *Etsu Bello* bought the motor-car,
 The men were beating the ground,
 And the woman, she was sitting at home.
 How did it happen that the woman was sitting at home?
 Of old it was the woman who was beating the ground,
 And the man he just stood and watched.
 But because of this motor-car of *Etsu Bello*,
 All the men were beating the ground, and that is that.³
 And all the people, the whole of Bida,
 They were saying their thanks to *mace da ciki*.⁴
 And all Bida was giving thanks to *karan giya*,⁴
 Who has sold the car to *Etsu Bello*.

¹ i.e. all the people who went out to see the motor-car were dressed in their most beautiful dress, and the glass-makers of Bida were busy manufacturing ornaments for the occasion.

² By 'beating the ground' is meant the levelling of the ground in the road building. The same term is also used for the levelling of the floor in the Nupe huts, a work which is reserved for the women. Therefore this comment on the change of times.

³ *Mace da ciki* (Hausa, pregnant woman), the rather irreverent nickname the Bida people had for the District Officer at that time.

⁴ *Karan giya* (Hausa, a grass with prickles—*Pennisetum*), another nickname for the District Officer at that time.

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And all the people were giving thanks to *Etsu* Bello,
Because he gave his money to buy a motor-car,
That motor-car that will become a thing of benefit
To all the human beings.

In myth and religion the 'binding forces' of the kingdom gather themselves to fullest strength. The *Etsu* Nupe is not, as we have seen, the religious as well as the political leader of his people; unlike the village chief, he cannot even claim kinship links with the priests of his country. But Nupe kingship is linked in so many ways with religious usages and forms of ritual symbolism that they inevitably become instruments of political solidarity. Rites and beliefs are focused upon the person of the king. Appeals for the help of supernatural agencies become appeals to agencies more or less clearly symbolic of the political system. The welfare and continuity of the community, unthinkable without these supernatural safeguards, become unthinkable without the state.

Out of the weak and irregular uniformity of beliefs and rituals and out of disconnected local cults and traditions the kingdom thus creates a new religious community. One of the centres of this religious unification is that 'mythical charter' which made the dynasty of Nupe kings descendants of the mythical culture-hero, *Tsoede*. Relics of *Tsoede*, regalia, instruments of ordeal, magical emblems, which exist in every town of the Emirate, are the symbols of this ancient sacred pact. The name and tradition of *Tsoede* is also associated with cults which secure childbirth, fertility, and well-being, with certain rituals which prevent floods of the Niger, drive away disease, or bring punishment upon a criminal.¹ To take one example only. In Mokwa exists a certain ritual called *Tsoede* or *sara* (Hausa, lit. malicious accusation, and also snake bite; refers here to the use of the ritual as ordeal), which is practised as ordeal, or whenever trouble befalls the community. It is performed by the *Sheshi*, that 'king-maker' of whom we have heard before; he places the short 'chain of *Tsoede*', the insignia of his office, on the ground in the sacred grove, makes a sacrifice of beer and fowl, and speaks thus:

God, we have come.
God, everybody has come.
This ancient thing of *Tsoede*
Which is lying on the ground,
It says we should bring beer.
Because of the old saying which we have heard,
Because of that we bring beer and fowl.
Tsoede, make the whole town prosper [or whatever is
the special aim of the invocation].

A powerful secret society, organized to combat witchcraft, the order of the *ndakó gboyá*, became a *kuti 'tsu*, a King's Cult, only half a century ago. There is no doubt that the *ndakó gboyá* cult itself existed long before that. But under *Etsu* Masaba the head of this order, the grandfather of

¹ This latter cult I have described in *Man*, 1935, 143. The association of *Tsoede* with the main fertility cult of Nupe, the *gummu*, is discussed in *J.R.A.I.*, 1937, p. 118.

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182 the present head of the *ndakó gboyá* society, was invested with the pom-
 643 pous title of *Maji Dodo*, Master of the Monster, and with this royal
 794 recognition the organization of the society was made subservient to Nupe
 kingship. One after the other the heads of the society received their
 titles from the *Etsu* Nupe. Villages and districts which sought the help
 of the *ndakó gboyá* against witches had to apply first to the king. This
 new royal prerogative also entailed a considerable economic benefit:
 for the king shared in the income of the order which was derived
 from the gifts collected in the villages which had called in the *ndakó*
gboyá.¹ But besides tapping a new source of income the co-operation
 between *Etsu* and anti-witchcraft society meant adding to the centralized
 temporal jurisdiction the power of spiritual, mystic jurisdiction over the
 supernatural enemies of society. This powerful prerogative of the king
 was, in fact, maintained by the Mohammedan Fulani Emirs till very
 recently.²

182 Every performance of these various rituals and cults in the villages
 642 and towns of Nupe—and many are still performed every year, long
 797 after the disappearance of the Tsoede dynasty—revived and perpetuated
 the consciousness of this unity which has grown into far more than an
 external bond of political unification. With the Islamization of the
 country many of these factors lost their power. The Fulani rulers could
 use the secret organization of the *ndakó gboyá*; they could seize by force,
 as they actually did, the royal insignia from the last Nupe king. They
 could not transfer the authority of the former 'mythical charter' to their
 own alien rulership. But they could introduce another, younger, and
 perhaps more powerful uniting force, Islam—Islam as creed and Islam
 as education. Mosques, a *Liman* and Mallams in every village, these are
 the instruments of propaganda.³ And in every religious service, in every
 babbling little Mallam school this propaganda is enacted. Teaching
 Islam means teaching the holy cause which sent the conquerors down to
 this country. Praying to Allah means praying to the God of the powerful
 and sharing with them, if not their power, their beliefs. But Moham-
 medanism even becomes a real means of social approach between rulers
 and ruled. In a country still to a large extent pagan the adoption of
 Mohammedanism creates something like an intermediary social stratum,
 placed nearer to the rulers than the rest of the population. Formerly it
 involved—at least in theory—certain concrete benefits: an increased
 measure of security, above all, immunity from slave-raids (as the Koran
 forbids the enslaving of Mohammedans). This rule, however, was never
 strictly obeyed—unless the religious qualification was supported by the

[66] ¹ The *ndakó gboyá* society soon became a means of ruthless exploitation. The
 king and the members of the society were extorting money from the peasants all
 over the country on the grounds of ridding their villages of witches. This became
 so intolerable that eventually the Administration of Bida Emirate had to forbid
 all performances of the *ndakó gboyá*. (For a fuller description see *Africa*, 1935, 4.)

² It is interesting to note that when the independent Emirate of Patigi was
 created by the Government this new Nupe ruler appointed a second *Maji Dodo*
 for his country.

³ Mokwa, a village of 2,000 inhabitants, possesses eight mosques, one of them
 built in 1934 during my stay in the village.

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more solid bond of political protection embodied in clientship. Attachment to the ruling group thus fused with conversion to its religion. In the early days of Fulani rule hundreds of pagans are said to have flocked into the capital to seek out an important person as their patron and to declare to him—and not to the religious officers of Islam—their readiness to embrace Mohammedanism. They received their turban and sword, insignia of clientship and new creed in one. Of such men the Nupe say not 'they become Mohammedans' but '*a ze goizi*'—'they become Fulani'.

Whatever the true essence of Mohammedan faith may be in Nupe, and however sparsely Mohammedanism has so far spread, Fulani rulership did create, and is creating, another 'mythical charter' of the kingdom. It tries again, with its new means, to mould the religious elements into the intensive unit almost of a State Church.¹ The effect of Islam as a 'binding force' of the precarious political system that the Fulani had erected cannot be doubted. A striking example is that under *Etsu Umaru* the whole Trans-Kaduna revolted, refused to pay the tribute, and finally made war on Bida. The rebellious peasants crossed the Kaduna river, marched against Bida and almost reached it, being defeated at a place called Bidakoko, a few miles outside.² The whole Trans-Kaduna, that is, with the exception of one town—the strongly Mohammedanized Dabbā, the same town where Mallam Dendo started his proselytizing work in Nupe, and which now refused to join in the war against the rulers with whom they shared their creed.

The identification of State and Church is demonstrated in the annual Mohammedan festival, the *Sallah*, which is as much a pageant of the might and splendour of the kingdom as a religious feast. There are two *Sallah* feasts, the Small *Sallah* and the Great *Sallah*, separated by a two months' interval.³ Their celebration may be called the climax of the whole year's cycle: the two feasts give the months in which they fall their names—*etswa salagi* and *etswa salakó*, 'month of the Small *Sallah*' and 'month of the Great *Sallah*'; and to these the people look forward and look back, in the long-drawn preparations and anticipation, and in recollections and memories. The *Sallah* feast is like a Friday celebration on an immensely enlarged scale. On the first day the king on horseback under the state umbrella and surrounded by his noblemen and state officials, leads the vast procession to the praying-ground outside the town, where the *Liman* holds the service. After the service the procession returns to the royal residence. Here a great display of horsemanship takes place, at which the bodyguard of the king, his police, and officers of state parade before him and his guests of honour—the foremost among whom are the District Officer and all the Europeans living

¹ See C. K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, 1925: 'Islam . . . has converted isolated pagan groups into nations; . . . it is largely due to Islam that numbers of tribes are now, before our eyes, forming themselves into nations' (ii, pp. 4, 10).

² It is said that this name Bidakoko was later given to the place of the battle, because *koko* a *tā Bida* o, 'almost they (the rebellious army) had reached Bida'.

³ The Nigerian *Sallah* is the *Beiram* or *Id* of other Mohammedan countries, which feasts are also celebrated twice, as 'Little *Beiram*' and 'Great *Beiram*'.

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796 in Bida Emirate. On the second day of the *Sallah* the *Etsu* holds the great *nkó* of the year, a reception at which everyone who holds rank and title and every person of consequence comes to salute his sovereign, to offer gifts of loyalty and to receive counter-gifts expressing the king's favour. For two days tens of thousands of people crowd the streets of Bida and assemble in front of the royal residence—Bida people as well as peasants from the villages who flock to the capital to see the *Sallah*. There they watch their rulers ride past in all their splendour, equipped with their paraphernalia of rank; they listen to music, drum signals, and songs of praise; they join in the general rejoicing, made more joyful by the largesse and gifts of food and kola-nuts which a gracious sovereign causes to be distributed among his loyal subjects. Here, then, it falls to the elements of worship and secular display, inextricably fused, and supported by the stimulus of mass experience, to mobilize periodically sentiments of loyalty and the consciousness of unity.

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186 From these manifold sources springs that common mental and moral orientation which we call national solidarity and loyalty to throne and country. Here are born the sentiments of unity which, in the words of Lowie, 'flourish without compulsion'. They crystallize largely round the figure of the king, thus giving substance to the self-description of the people of Nupe kingdom as 'king's men'. Yet the king is not simply the state—the factors checking his authority, his varying powers, show clearly that he is only an organ of the state. Nor is he a symbol of the power and unity of the state in the same concrete and personal sense in which the village chief can be regarded as a symbol of his community. Kings have been deposed and exiled; they have to fight and intrigue for their position; they are subject to the openly working balance of power. All this is well known—too well known for the identification of the person of the king with the unity of the society. Loyalty to a personal king of Nupe is factional; solidarity and loyalty on a national scale rallies round the throne and round the abstract principle of kingship rather than round the actual king.¹

But the 'binding forces' are not wholly pivoted on kingship. They yield also a consciousness of commonness referring to the country as such, the people as such, to a largely abstract and timeless collective identity which no longer needs the sustaining symbol of kingship. These 'binding forces' implant in the minds of the people of the state the realization that, over and above tribal sections, cultural and class divisions, they form a single human material, living an identical life. They teach a new meaning of the word Nupe, which is the meaning of *nation*. Collective pride, otherwise vested in the tribe or the local community, and its counterpart, the aloof or critical attitude towards other groups and their culture, fuses with and is supplanted by the sentiments of national pride—patriotism. Co-ordination of behaviour loses its aspect of a dictated order sanctioned by force, and becomes indis-

¹ It is possible that this was less so in the pre-Fulani kingdom, with its undivided rulership, invested with ritual functions and based on a unique, automatic, system of succession. Here kingship may well have been accepted in a much more concrete and personal sense as the symbol and pivot of political unity.

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tinguishable from the self-willed conformity born of a closely knit community life. The state itself becomes that twin-creation as which MacIver conceives it, and, with one side of its being, a community.

The process is not yet complete. Existing social divisions and divergent 'interest units' are not wholly submerged in the new consciousness of unity. Sociologically, the incompleteness of the development is visible in the reluctance with which certain sections, especially among the peasantry, respond to the cultural reorientation. Psychologically, it manifests itself in the ambiguous attitude of many individuals in the lower classes, vacillating between bitter resentment against the ruling class and readiness to identify themselves with its glory, of which we have seen examples. It is an attitude familiar in many societies similarly split by sharp distinctions of political and social inequality.¹ One might doubt whether this process of intensive unification will ever be completed now, with new influences coming in, new cultural and class divisions being formed which disturb the steady growth and blur the old border-lines. I do not myself think that this will be so. But in a wider sense the growth of the Nupe nation, even if it were to continue undisturbed, would never be complete: for the nation is a dynamic, not a static, unit, a unit which must constantly readjust itself and constantly absorb new 'raw material'—new generations, newly-formed classes, strata, groups.

The achieved integration of the state is then in some measure, like that of the village community, the integration of a 'multiple system of control'. Yet the state and the village community differ not only in the intensity and completeness but also in the quality of the integration which they achieve. We noticed that the 'binding forces' of the state appear in varying degrees of concreteness, from actual co-operation to moral orientation, and that those of most abstract appeal were the really effective ones. In this, I believe, lies the essential difference between the integrative mechanism operating in the village community and this new mechanism of creating nation-wide unity. Evidently, the very difference in size and numbers must play a decisive part. In the village all integrative agencies can address themselves to an identical group substratum, and can envelop it in the network of actual collaboration. The state, with its huge human substratum, its subdivisions and sections, precludes the full effectiveness of such direct and concrete integration. Direct contact and direct co-adaptation of behaviour is subordinated to indirect methods of bringing about conformity, through ideological persuasion. Actual concerted action gives way to efforts at securing parallel action, and 'common' interests in the strict sense are replaced by 'identical' interests. Instead of communal rites at which groups that in other contexts act as political units are welded together by the influence of religious experience, we have the spreading of common beliefs and practices designed to call forth identity of outlook and to foster, though not an identical group, a group conscious of identity.

Ultimately and rather surprisingly, then, the binding forces of the

¹ M. T. Herskovits has called it, by a suggestive term, 'socialized ambivalence' (*Life in a Haitian Valley*, p. 295).

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692 state can be reduced to the fact of cultural assimilation. Yet it is not that random assimilation which is only incidental to the expanding state, and which only superficially obscures social division, achieving but an insecure, external, likeness. This assimilation is designed to carry the foci of cohesion and solidarity—ideologies, and the institutions by which they are sustained. I said 'designed'. But how far are we justified in regarding this assimilation and the incentives behind it as deliberately conceived and employed by the political system and its agents? Certain practices such as the encouragement given to Mallams proselytizing among the pagans, the reward of increased security held out to converts, or the engagement of musicians and poets to sing the praises of the king and the kingdom, represent actual 'propaganda', still carried out under our eyes. Others, such as the supplanting of a local cult by a 'king's ritual', must have amounted to the same in former times (in the case of the royal interest in the *ndakó gboyá* society it can be proved to have been so only two generations ago). Other forms of persuasion, again, may have worked through the unconscious mechanism of habits and views formed imperceptibly. Often their agents are men who have been in the Fulani wars or who have in some other way been associated with the ruling group and then returned to their villages, where their stories and memories aid the other, institutionalized, 'propaganda' of the kingdom. In a wider sense, however, they all are deliberately conceived and employed: they are agencies of an assimilation conscious of itself and of the message which it carries.

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695 But in the Bida Court temper may run high, especially when people of standing and wealth are involved who not infrequently will argue and remonstrate with the judge. I have seen judges lose their patience with such unmanageable parties, shout at them and threaten them with punishment for this 'contempt of court'.

692 Before the pretentious Bida Court with its office hours and fixed rules of procedure, its crowd of subordinate officials, assistants, scribes, ushers, policemen, a multitude of cases are brought daily which fit well into its up-to-date routine: offences against the by-laws of a modern town (riding a bicycle without light, or riotous behaviour in the street or the market, &c.) and all the various disputes bound to occur where you have an intensive trade, complicated money transactions, and suchlike. But before the same court come the cases (and in this book we are only concerned with these) that are the expression of tensions and conflicts of the society in its old unchanged form—cases of inheritance, divorce, witchcraft. The extension of native jurisdiction over the problems and conflicts of a modern urban community, which is merely a question of applying jurisdiction and executive under the guidance of the British Administration, is of less interest to us than the progressive penetration of formal political jurisdiction into the domains of traditional native life, which is a problem of legislation that the native society must itself solve. In this, the modern Native Court is the legitimate heir of the pre-British system of law—heir both to its strength and its weakness.

692 We may say that the modern legal system is both more comprehensive (embracing, above all, the domain of kinship) and, viewed from the standpoint of the groups which submit to its jurisdiction, more alien than the old system. To explain this we must for a moment go back to a question discussed previously. I have said that every extension of a uniform jurisdiction and legislation over new social domains involves potentially the substitution of a new law for original codes and conceptions, and thus a certain disparity between the recognized law and the culture of which the old conceptions were an expression. This disparity is clearly a phenomenon of transition: every society will tend in the course of time to eliminate such a hiatus—either by reacting against the expanding judicial system and forcing it to adjust its too extravagant claims (we shall presently encounter instances of this)—or by completing that process of cultural assimilation of which the co-ordination of legal concepts represents only one aspect. We may assume that our table of jurisdiction in pre-British times, which shows a certain system of law firmly accepted throughout the society, refers to aspects of culture in which this process of mutual assimilation has been completed. Whether or not my hypothesis is historically correct, we must admit that where the process is still in motion, where the politically-backed law is only just extending its hold over new domains, the disparity of which I have spoken must be visible. This is indeed the case to-day, when Mohammedan law is being applied to kinship offences.

671 182 It would go beyond the scope of this book to study the relation between Mohammedan law as it is practised in Nupe and the traditional concepts of kinship conduct and kinship rights and duties. I may be

671 allowed to reduce this relation to a simple formula: if the former is born
 182 of the social conditions of an urbanized stratified society and reflects the
 specific concepts of property and morality which have evolved there, the
 latter is typical of the peasant community, its economic pursuits, its
 values and interests. The Mohammedan law as it is applied in Nupe has
 undergone a number of significant changes in the comparatively short
 period of Fulani and later British rule. The knowledge of the more im-
 portant changes (e.g. in the treatment of seduction and adultery) has
 spread throughout the country and the changes remain linked in the
 memory of the people with the names of the judges who were their
 originators. Some changes are regarded as good, others as bad, and
 accordingly judges have earned or forfeited the reputation of being 'wise
 men'. The lawgivers themselves have been aware of the necessity of
 bringing their extraneous legal machinery into at least partial harmony
 with existing conditions and conceptions.

Here a new aspect of the 'disparity' between law and culture reveals
 itself. The very fluidity of this evolution of a new legislation must
 remove the law from the orbit of the average citizen. He is no longer
 able to keep track of it as he could when the legal system could be
 reduced to the short list of 'civil offences' and 'crimes of the king'. I
 have encountered ample evidence of this kind—erroneous beliefs of
 individuals as to particular laws or forms of legal procedure. Some ten
 or fifteen years ago unscrupulous judges made use of the ignorance of
 the peasants and prosecuted, for 'neglect of their parental duties' the
 parents of girls and young men suspected of illegitimate sexual inter-
 course. The repercussions of this abuse are still felt, and many peasants
 dare not bring a case of seduction before the court for fear of being fined
 themselves. A conspicuous evidence of this gulf between the law and
 the people is the continued practice of peasants and commoners to seek
 out a Mallam or a person of standing and have him accompany them to
 the court when they are about to commit themselves to the vagaries of
 an unknown law.

The disparity between law and culture is naturally most marked in the
 slow-moving peasant communities, where social and economic condi-
 tions diverge most fundamentally from the social life of which Moham-
 medan law is an expression. Here the unfamiliarity of the judges, who
 come from the highest families of the kingdom and who are Bida born
 and bred, with the local situation and specific customary practices (e.g.
 marriage rules) may add yet another source of conflict.¹ Even the
 religious emblems upon which the Nupe were wont to take the oath are
 absent in the modern District Court which, instead, is using the Koran.²
 Pagans will always be ready to swear by the Koran if asked to do so by

¹ Some of the local *Alkhalai* may be very reluctant to regard themselves as per-
 manently attached to their station. They may be hoping for a speedy promotion,
 eventually to the court in Bida.

² In a court in the Nupe district of Ilorin Province a very enlightened *Alkali*
 used both Koran and the 'chain of Tsoede' to do justice to Mohammedans as well
 as pagans. In this as in similar respects much depends on the personality (and
 special training) of the individual judge.

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the *Alkali*, said one of my informants, and will think nothing of perjuring themselves.

Let me quote a significant instance. [An Ebe man had refused to let his daughter marry a Hausa whom she loved, having a different suitor from Ebe country in mind for her. The Hausa brought the case before the *Alkali* of Kutigi (some 50 miles away); the *Alkali* instructed the father to give his blessing to the marriage on the grounds that the Koran decreed that no father should stand between two young people who loved each other.] The father swore an oath to that effect on the Koran and returned home. But after a month the Hausa came back, reporting that the girl's father had renewed his opposition to the marriage. Three times they were summoned to court, and three times the father agreed in the presence of the *Alkali*, only to revoke his agreement afterwards. At last I happened to be in the court and asked the man if perhaps the Ebe disliked letting their daughters marry outside the sub-tribe or tribe. Evidently relieved, the man said that this was indeed the case. Curiously enough, the girl, who had till then stubbornly maintained her desire to marry the Hausa, declared that she would obey her father as soon as the customary marriage rule was brought up in the court.

This example also illustrates the effects of what I have called above the 'divided law': the girl and her suitor, well knowing that if they submitted to the customary law as it was upheld by her father and most probably the village elders would not be able to marry, appealed to the Mohammedan court, whose decision, as they anticipated, was favourable to them. Here we see what I have mentioned above—that in districts in which the customary conceptions of law still obtain, modern legislation puts a premium on breaches of the traditional usage. This is shown most clearly in litigation over inheritance. According to Mohammedan law the property and land left by a family head should be divided equally among the sons; traditional rules of inheritance hold that land and property should be inherited by the younger brother, and that sons and brothers' sons should stay on the land working under the heir as under their sociological father. [This rule expresses the interest of a farming community in maintaining landed property so far as possible intact, while the Mohammedan rule does justice primarily to owners of movable property, money, trade goods, or cattle. Now, for reasons which we shall examine in a later chapter modern economic developments have led increasingly to the adoption of the Mohammedan solution. But were individuals still to attempt to enforce the traditional rule, dissatisfied family members could easily obtain a reversal of this decision by appealing to the Mohammedan court.]

Again we observe the effectiveness of the 'social law' which we have formulated above, that a stronger law ousts a weaker law. The existence of the divided authority which favours 'dissenters' from traditional law, must force chief and elders—the guardians of traditional usage—to surrender in ever larger measure the authority which they are still holding to the stronger authority of the state law, even to invite its intervention—as did the family heads who appealed to their feudal lord for support of their paternal authority. It is important to emphasize this, as

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671 many Administrative Officers think it desirable that the village chiefs
 182 and elders should continue to practise their informal arbitration side by
 692 side with the existing official courts. Our data preclude the likelihood of
 622 such a parallel development; they show that the tendency is rather
 towards the virtual surrender of one to the other. We have heard that in
 the present-day judicial arrangement the Village Head is expected to
 send all legal cases which cannot be settled by arbitration to the District
Alkali's court. Now I have found the chiefs quite satisfied with this
 state of affairs, which freed them of the responsibility in more serious
 cases. Some seemed, in fact, quite frightened at the idea of taking over
 this responsibility themselves, and were only too ready to leave a larger
 and larger proportion of their judicial tasks to the professional judge.
 'To-day', a chief said to me, 'people want written judgements in such
 cases as divorce, inheritance, debts; *ama mi de takarda a*, but I have no
 papers to give.' ('Papers' are only the modern symbols of the more
 powerful and more permanent authority wielded by state jurisdiction;
 in his own words the chief expressed the essence of that principle of
 'divided authority'.

Shall we acquiesce with the chief in these results of an inevitable
 process of change? I think not. Politically, the chief is divested already
 of much of his former power. To divest him also of all judicial authority
 is to deprive him of the last vestige of the most vital prerogative of his
 office, which is the enforcement of a certain line of conduct upon his
 community, and to sanction all deviations from it as acts detrimental to
 the welfare of the community. It would amount to turning the chief
 completely into a petty executive official, entitled only to carry out orders,
 but with no right to voice public opinion. Besides, the disregard for
 local customs by the professional Mohammedan judges is felt as a real
 hardship by many. Even if more change is on the way, bound to promote
 the final assimilation of Mohammedan law and customary practice, its
 pace should be set by the people themselves, and not by an alien, un-
 interested judge. In the nature of things the solution must lie in a com-
 promise. In my view the best compromise would be to vest the Village
 Head with the right (and, more important, the duty) to act as an assessor
 in the court, with full consultative authority, whenever cases from his
 community are brought before the *Alkali*.¹

This does not contradict what I have said in a previous section about
 the 'parochial outlook' of the village chief. The parochial outlook may
 unfit him for responsible posts in the administration of the Emirate at
 large, such as District Headship, which call for a wide view and an
 appreciation of policy on, as it were, a national scale. But it is just this
 parochial outlook which qualifies the village chief eminently for dealing
 with legal cases, bound up as they are with local conditions. However,
 there is a wider issue involved in this question—the most intricate
 problem which modern administration has to solve, the problem of
 centralization versus local autonomy.

¹ This solution is envisaged in the Native Courts Ordinance, which leaves it
 to the discretion of the Native Court to appoint assessors from the ranks of
 village chiefs and elders.

441 what were (to the society) the least dangerous groups. This limitation is
562 no longer true. But the information which I collected on this point, from
548 every part of the country, and every social stratum, leaves no doubt that
the limitation did obtain, and that it is still regarded as the more
adequate practice. Formerly, I was told, no peasant would have dreamed
of letting his young wife go to distant markets the journey to which
would involve spending the night on the road, away from home. Nor
did women with children ever leave the home for these long expeditions
to foreign parts. To-day, an ever-increasing number of Nupe women,
young women and women with children, travel about the country, in-
dependent, and unrestricted by village morals. In the large trading-
places in the south such as Baro, Lokoja, Ibadan, I have met many—
they lived there, some with their children, as well-known traders and as
equally well-known prostitutes.

441 We have learned that this development is due to a variety of social
462 factors. We will discuss here the factors which are embodied in the
548 economic changes, and which, in fact, appear to represent the main
182 moving force. It is difficult to say for certain whether the floating popu-
lation of wifeless men has considerably increased during the last genera-
tion. It seems to have done so. But speaking more generally, the rapid
development of trade since the pacification of the country after the
Fulani wars and specially after the British conquest cannot be doubted.
It appears to have overtaken Nupe society unawares, as it were, without
giving it the chance to readjust itself gradually to the new conditions.
Trade, in the war-disturbed times of the past an occupation for men who
could carry arms, fell now easily to the women. It called for new
recruits, and seized upon the existing system of division of labour be-
tween the sexes—men as producers, and women as 'middlemen' and
traders. Yet this organization, which was designed to fit into the narrow
scope of village life, was adapted too readily to the purposes of the new
widespread trade that developed in the Emirates. No other system of
division of labour and specialization, it appears, could be evolved as
quickly to take charge of the new tasks. It could not but disorganize
social life. Family organization and the traditional concepts of morality
fell victims to economic progress. The profit motive, here as in many
other fields of Nupe economy, outstripped and overruled the interests of
group cohesion and group stability.

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in Nupe I found the following *dashi* associations in practice: *dashi* associations formed by women, the wives of farmers in Doko, Kacha, and one or two other villages, in which the weekly subscription was 3d.: they numbered between twelve and thirty members; a *dashi* among the Bida barbers, with the subscription of 4d. weekly, numbering ten members (I was told, incidentally, that formerly their *dashi* was organized on a much larger scale). Another *dashi*, numbering twenty-four members, was formed by N.A. scribes; here the subscription was high, in accordance with their salary, 10s. per month. The teachers of Bida Middle School also formed a *dashi*, numbering twelve members, with a subscription of 7s. 6d. per month. Eight members of this group had formed a *dashi* with a subscription of £1 per month the previous year. Several *dashi* associations have disappeared owing to the economic stress. The labourers at the Bida workshops had practised the *dashi* till five years ago, but had given it up when their wages were lowered. The beadworkers, who had also practised the *dashi* formerly, had abandoned it owing to the decline of their business. I received the same information among carpenters, blacksmiths, and butchers. The canoe-men in Jebba, finally, who used to organize their *dashi* at irregular times, had not had a *dashi* for several years.

Returning to the general discussion of 'insurance': as the large co-operative unit in agriculture and home industry is disappearing, and, with it, the 'insurance' which it provided, one may wonder whether this must not bring the other, individual, insurance arrangements more to the foreground. It is thus rather surprising that the practice of the *dashi*, far from increasing, is disappearing. The people, as we have heard, explain this as being due to the general economic decline. The beadworkers said that they had no money to spare, and the barbers and labourers did not think it worth their while to organize a *dashi* with a small subscription. Borrowing, on the other hand, especially the borrowing by husbands from their wives, is markedly on the increase. Disputes over debts of this kind are frequent in divorce proceedings in Bida. The examination of household budgets also reveals a considerable number of instances (five out of fifty) in which husbands borrowed money, chiefly for tax, from their more prosperous wives; and even in remote places, such as fishing villages on islands in the Niger, where the women are by no means the enterprising traders they are in Bida or larger villages, husbands borrowed up to 8s. and 9s. from their wives. That under a continued economic stress borrowing may spread and increase further, and eventually lead to the introduction of professional money-lending, is not improbable. Borrowing in Nupe, which has once already reached a peak (in pawning), might well, in a different form, grow again to such dimensions.

It is clearly a sign of the growing instability of the native economic system that the solid and comprehensive insurance against risks which is vested in the co-operative labour-unit is disappearing, and that its place is taken by the most restricted, most temporary, form of insurance — borrowing. Once again, we encounter social and economic repercussions of the dissolution of the large labour-unit. If previously we have seen that this development has adversely affected certain aspects of

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182 production, the present case demonstrates forcibly that it affects the very stability of the economic system of the country. We cannot claim to be able to describe exactly how the labour-unit was working under traditional conditions, and to state categorically that the scheme of insurance entailed in it operated without difficulty or friction. But on the evidence which we possess it is reasonable to assume that under certain conditions, with a smaller taxation, and protected from severe, incalculable, market fluctuations, the large co-operative group represented—or would represent—an eminently stable and successful labour-unit. The process of transformation cannot be halted. Where the large labour-unit still exists, it may, given the conditions just mentioned, be preserved; where it has disappeared, it cannot be revived. Our conclusions point to one solution only: to the creation of new institutions and labour organizations which can be made to fulfil, under existing conditions, those tasks which fell formerly to the labour organization that has disappeared—above all, the task of insurance. Such institutions can be found in co-operative organization, saving societies, co-operative marketing, and suchlike—organizations which in other parts of Africa have amply proved their efficiency.¹

ECONOMIC RELATIONS AND THE GROUP

602 Throughout this discussion we have dealt with family and kinship group purely in their economic aspect. We have interpreted the mechanisms which maintain the working-unit and thus the co-operation in its human substratum, the family group, in terms of economic relations only. Against this treatment of the problem one might argue that it sees only one side of it, and that the kinship and family structure must be taken into account also as an entity *sui generis*, which, within the framework of economic relations, exercises its own specific influences. One might argue, in particular, that as the Nupe *efakó*-unit is based on the family, kinship ties and kinship sentiments as such supply the binding forces of the labour group—'maintain labour', in our terminology—and that the binding forces which we have recognized, namely, commonness of material interests and benefits accruing from co-operation, are in reality mutual kinship obligations.

The double nature of economic obligations in a productive unit which happens to be a kinship-unit at the same time cannot be denied. The influence of kinship factors can, in fact, be made evident by comparing the labour-unit based on kinship, with similar labour-units in which kinship plays no part. While, in the former, co-operation is achieved by mutual obligations such as payment of bride-price, and supply of clothing, food, and shelter, labour of the latter order must be recompensed in the form of money wages. The effectiveness of kinship

¹ It has been said that our intention should always be to graft these new co-operative organizations on to existing, indigenous, organizations. The scope and the possibilities of such a scheme must not be exaggerated. Although the tasks with which the new organization is to be charged may have formed part of the traditional system, the organization itself may have to be newly created, and may, in fact (as in our case), have to replace a failing indigenous organization, rendered inadequate by modern conditions.

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sentiments in co-operation was also implied in various statements made earlier in the discussion of economics. We have seen that the craft-guilds plan their labour organization on kinship lines, and reinforce the labour group by what we have called 'professional endogamy'. But let us realize that in doing this they do not appeal to abstract kinship ties or 'bonds of blood', but merely duplicate the common labour interests by corresponding family interests, namely, the concrete interests and forms of social interdependence entailed in intermarriage. Another instance of the influence of kinship ties became apparent in the fact that to-day sons would still agree to stay in the *efakó*, while brother's sons decline to do so. Yet we have also seen that even sons desire under certain conditions to be released from the *efakó*-unit. In the case of individual crafts and trade, kinship obligations, even of sons to fathers, are no longer recognized. The dissolution of the large labour-unit, moreover, has made it abundantly clear that its size and coherence is determined predominantly by economic interests and relations. Kinship bonds and sentiments are not strong enough to maintain a labour group once its economic usefulness is impaired. Generally speaking, then, kinship bonds, in order to supply a substratum for productive co-operation, must have the support of economic incentives—material benefits and forms of compensation. Where the latter fail, the kinship bonds themselves will fail in this task. 602

Though we cannot thus admit the effectiveness of kinship factors as such (at least not in a decisive measure) upon the labour organization, the reverse is no doubt true. The labour organization exercises a two-fold influence upon the structure of the family and kinship group: (1) through contributing to the co-operative mechanisms within the kinship group, and (2) through accepting the responsibility for certain tasks which are vital to the continuity and stability of the kinship group. 542 182

(1) The integration of the kinship group, that is, the 'internal adaptation' of the social unit (Radcliffe-Brown), is largely determined by the scope and closeness of contacts and forms of co-operation existing in the group. Co-operation in the same labour-unit thus represents one of the most important integrative factors in this sense. We remember also that the labour-unit coincides with the household-unit, and that the individuals who agree to work together also 'keep house', eat, and live together. The constant contacts and the lasting mutual adjustment entailed in this productive arrangement build up strongly coherent units. The reduction in size, and the splitting-up into small individual units, of the large labour-unit, must detract essentially from the integration of the family group.

(2) Speaking generally, the large labour group, led by old and experienced men, is more far-sighted in its economic planning than the small one-man or two-men unit. It allows for certain group interests which the individual worker will ignore, or discount as of lesser importance; it can assess necessities and wants more objectively, with a view to the fundamental needs of the group rather than immediate individual satisfaction. Thus the family head will place foremost the necessity of finding the bride-price for the junior family members in order to

602 establish them socially as full members of the community, i.e. as married
 592 men, and, indirectly, to assure the continuity of the family group. We
 182 have seen that even if the family head is unable to produce the necessary
 amount himself, and the young men have themselves to contribute, the
 family head would keep and save the money for them. The young men,
 left to themselves, are tempted to squander money on things which
 appear to them to be of greater urgency, and to disregard, to their own
 detriment as well as to the detriment of the group, the more distant
 necessity of marriage. As in the case of the Bida labourers, their money
 'goes at once', and they remain unmarried even a considerable time after
 having reached marriageable age. In the extreme case a family head would
 even pawn the labour and liberty of a younger family member who is less
 essential to the group for the sake of keeping in freedom the elder, more
 important family member, or enabling him to found a family. We can
 go even farther than this. Older men, tending to uphold tradition, will
 plan labour and expenditure so that there should be money, food, as well
 as time available for family feasts or communal religious ceremonies.
 Their efforts thus serve (unconsciously) the interests of group integra-
 tion at large, which the younger generation, not so fully steeped in tradi-
 tional ways of thinking, may hesitate to put before more immediate
 attractions. Finally, by submitting to the authority of the older men in
 productive co-operation, the labour-unit also sustains their position of
 authority in a wider sense, as leaders of the community. We can say, then,
 that the large labour-unit is committed to the maintenance of the structure
 and the traditional values of the society, and that with its dissolution
 an important agency of social integration and continuity disappears.

796 The changes which the *gunnu* ritual has undergone recently are a con-
 602 vincing instance of this kind. In its traditional form the *gunnu* con-
 182 tained a certain most stirring scene which took place on the eve of the
 ritual, and which concerned the young men of the village especially.
 They were herded together in a certain place in the uninhabited bush,
 where they had to spend the night; they were to wait for a terrifying
 apparition, the spirit of the *ndakó gboyá*, who would question them about
 their moral conduct in the preceding year. If they were found guilty of
 having behaved disrespectfully towards their elders, they were flogged
 by their comrades at the command of the spirit. I have quoted already
 the article in which I described in detail the ritual and its effectiveness as
 a mechanism of social integration in the family group as well as the
 community.¹ But even from this short description we can gather the
 psychological importance of a ritual which uses such impressive stimuli
 to press home moral teaching, and to bind together periodically, in a
 common experience, the growing generation. Now, although the *gunnu*
 is still performed, the 'bush night' has been abandoned in many villages,
 and the explanation given was everywhere that the young men had re-
 fused to be subjected to the ordeal of this inquisition and punishment.
 The young men themselves were outspoken about the reasons of their
 refusal: 'We are now working as independently as the old men, we are
 paying tax for ourselves—why should we be flogged and threatened as if

¹ See pp. 25, 63.

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we were small boys' In their own words they confirm my argument that the weakening of productive co-operation entails a weakening also of other forms and bonds of group unity.

We may for the moment reflect on the fact that this progressive weakening of group integration occurs in a society with decreasing population. Partly this development underlines the strength and urgency of the forces which are working for the dissolution of the large labour-unit, and which here foster the tendency to split and reduce in size a working-unit which is already, as it were, automatically declining. But it also reveals the significant fact that a loosening integration and progressive subdivision of units is not invariably correlated with an increase in the size of groups, and the inherent difficulty of maintaining cohesion.¹

The present discussion has transcended the domain of economics. Where previously we have attempted to demonstrate the effects of changes in the structure of the labour-unit within the range of economic relations, i.e. on productive organization and the stability of the economic system, we are now studying the significance of these changes for the organization and stability of the social group. We can trace the influence of the changing economic organization upon social structure through wider and wider circles. Take the institution of the Nupe market. We have seen that the peasant attendance of the local village markets coincides with a local group characterized by regular social contacts, intermarriage and 'common living' in general. The market meeting mobilizes the local community, adds to the common interests, and forms an important focus for these contacts and forms of intercourse. Like the labour-unit on a smaller scale, it contributes essentially to social integration. This is no longer true of professional trade, which is carried on across community boundaries, and remains independent of established group-ties. Like the modern labour-unit, professional trade accepts solely the dictate of the impersonal profit motive.

Expanding trade connexions of this kind are only possible in a social system which provides safety and protection outside the narrow boundaries of the local community. They depend, in other words, on the large-scale political organization of the state. Like the economic relations which take place within its confines, the integrative mechanism of the state is essentially impersonal, and based on abstract principles rather than forms of co-adaptation growing from 'common living'. The transformation in the group substratum of economic relations is thus determined by the same concepts which also determine the transformation of the largest group unit, from community to state. Technically, the expansion of trade and commerce, production and exchange, would have been impossible without the corresponding expansion of political control. It would, perhaps, be going too far to say that spiritually also the former would have been impossible without the latter—without the conceptual framework which the latter provided. But we are justified in saying that the two forms of expansion reflect, materially as well as spiritually, two aspects of the same social process.

¹ This latter view was expressed, in the form of a 'social law', by Professor Radcliffe-Brown.

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division goes much farther, and we find a large number of disconnected associations, which are no longer co-ordinated or conform to a common pattern. I estimate the number of age-grade associations in Bida at 200. The individual *ena* is, again, bound up with locality, and includes boys and young men from the same part of the town. But here two new factors enter: social differentiation, and divided political allegiance. The very fact that the Bida *ena* finds its members among friends and close acquaintances already expresses the tendency to make it socially homogeneous, and to limit its membership to individuals from the same social stratum, or the same professional group. *Saraki* and *talaka* never mix in the same *ena*. Nor do prosperous traders or Mallams join the same *ena* as peasants or small craftsmen; nor does, finally, the youth of the craft-guilds intermingle—glass-workers, blacksmiths, weavers, all have their separate age-grade associations. The limitation with regard to locality and close acquaintances is less rigid in the highest grades than in the junior grades. For as in the course of years the membership decreases, some members having died, others having left the *ena* or perhaps the town, it sometimes becomes necessary to open the membership of the highest grade to people from other parts of the town. Yet no *ena* would accept members from beyond the boundary of the town *ekpā*. The political solidarity of the three dynastic divisions of the town is thus reflected in, and even, as we shall see, actively supported by, the age-grade associations of the capital.

Here once more we gain insight into the social significance of the Nupe age-grade association: it underlines and fosters the solidarity of the existing social groupings. This means something different in the village and in the town. In the former it refers to the village community at large, and we find the age-grade associations stretching across it, and across the large kinship units and 'houses' into which the village society is divided. We can liken the age-grade system to a horizontal plane cutting across the separate structures of the extended families, with their wide base, tapering off to the apex of the one official representative of the family group, the titled elder. The age-grade association must thus counteract all possible separatist tendencies of individual kinship groups and sustain the large-scale integration on which the existence of the village as a social unit depends. In large villages this integrative scheme is in some measure narrowed down, owing to the size of the groups that can be absorbed effectively in a single age-grade association. It assumes, in fact, a somewhat different aspect, in uniting the extended kinship units within themselves—in the form of the large *efu* group—that is, in holding together the widely expanded structure which is to support the apex of a common official representative.

In the town the existing social grouping is created and held together by political and class interests. Here again, the age-grade association fosters the unity of a group which is to submit, in 'real' life, to a common head. But he no longer represents the 'apex' of an organically grown structure; as the *ena* is largely the product of a free, voluntary association, the group loyalty which it fosters is towards the freely chosen leader of a local political faction.

● 182 The integrative tendencies in the *ena* are expressed in every one
 369 of the typical age-grade activities. In the village they revolve round
 561 the three centres of social life: work, recreation, religion. In the Bida
ena the first is reduced to insignificant dimensions; the second is
 raised to almost paramount importance; the third remains on the whole
 unchanged, being only transferred to a different plane—Mohammedan
 religion.

561 I have already spoken of the role which the *ena* plays in organizing
 collective farm-work in the village. We need only add that these activities
 concern the higher age-grades more than the junior groups, the
 members of which are not yet skilled farmers. It is commonly agreed
 that every young man who has gone through the three grades leaves the
ena a fully trained farmer. Not everyone can become a *Sode*; but the
 success of the team counts for much. Here the *Ndahotsu* will prove his
 capability as organizer. He will put his pride into making his team the
 most efficient—all means being counted as fair. An old man, still known
 as *Ndahotsu*, told me how he used to help his group of workers to defeat
 589 all the other teams by means of a charm which 'made their hoes go twice
 as fast'.

561 Under recreational aims we must understand both recreation in the
 574 narrow sense—age-grade feasts and 'parties'—and the conventional
 festivities with which the Nupe celebrate kinship events: naming cere-
 monies, weddings, and funerals. The recreational activities in the
 narrow sense concern the individual association; in the celebration of
 kinship events to which all young men who are related to the family are
 invited, members of different grades frequently join. The *Ndahotsu*,
Etsu, and also the members of higher rank are expected to entertain the
 group in their houses at fairly regular intervals. There will be food,
 drinks, kola-nuts, and often drummers and dancers. In Bida the mem-
 bers of the *ena* meet at least once a month at such parties. Smaller
 festivities are attended only by the *ena* members themselves; to the
 larger meetings, especially those which mark the beginning and end
 of the *ena* term, friends and relations of both sexes are also invited.
 At one of the festivities with which the inauguration of the new
 age-grade term was celebrated in Kutigi I counted well over a hundred
 guests.

561 Let me take you to such an age-grade feast in Bida. It is held in the
 574 courtyard of the house. It starts in the afternoon or evening and lasts
 far into the night. The guests sit and squat in a closely packed circle,
 leaving a small space in the centre for drummers and dancers. On one
 535 side the host is sitting together with *Etsu* and *Ndahotsu*; as a rule they
 554 only sit and watch the performance; but the guests are ready at every
 369 moment to exchange the role of spectators for that of performers.
 There exist special *ena gbarifuti* dances, performed at these occasions:
 they consist of a slow, graceful forward-and-backward movement of a
 row of dancers, five or six young men, who dance side by side, the arms
 stretched out and the body bent slightly forward, setting their feet in
 small, measured, steps. Group follows group in the dancing arena.
 Individual dancers leap into the 'arena', and perform a short solo or

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571 of the girls' *ena*. So much for the interpretation of the *ena nyentsugiti* on the lines of the Nupe argument.

561 But if for women the age-grade career comes to an end with marriage, while for men marriage represents neither a limit nor even a conspicuous grade in the age-grade career, this reflects also the different sociological significance that marriage has for women and men. For women, it is the end of one life and the beginning of another. It means change of home and family bonds, and initiation into new aims and duties. For men, marriage—a first marriage—does not even coincide with the periodical readjustments in the labour-unit, i.e. the release from the *efakó* group which, as we have seen, takes place as a rule when a man has two wives or grown-up children. The social career of the men—achievement of economic independence, promotion to office, and responsible position in the community—only begins to fulfil itself long after their first marriage; that of the women is meant to enter its last phase in marriage. Indeed we have seen that when the woman claims the right of an independent, continued, social career, she must buy it with the sacrifice of the marriage union.

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864 As regards the institution of the parallel age-grades its practical value seems to be that it prepares the ground for the first experiences of sex relations. Or rather, it aims at circumventing, and dulling, this unsettling first experience. Enabling the sexes to meet in the critical age, between 13 and 16, as it were on neutral ground, openly and respectfully, it tends to remove some of the secrecy and unhealthy curiosity that is part of the mental transition from the self-contained existence of early youth to the new awareness of the polarity of sex. Our study of adult sex morality has left no doubt about the restricted effectiveness of this native 'co-educational' scheme. It must fail because it is, like all faulty education, in the nature of a palliative. It breaks the adolescent, we might say, gently, to the moral code of adulthood, but it adopts this code in all its dangerous narrowness and its rigid exclusion of amorous experiments and pre-marital sex relations. If age-grade discipline paves the way for adult sex morality, it does so also with respect to its repressions and inhibitions, and that final sweeping reaction against conventional morality which we could study in the adult life of the Nupe people.

561 To summarize. The age-grade associations include the adolescent male (and to lesser extent female) population of Nupe from early youth up to the threshold of adulthood. The most vital years in individual development are thus brought under the influence of this institution. We have studied the decisive part which it plays in moulding the personality of its members and in defining their attitude towards tasks and problems which they are to face in adult life. The essence of the institution of age-grades is, then, preparation—a twofold preparation. Its first aspect is the fashioning in the framework of the age-grades of sentiments of solidarity which are to bind the group at large.

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561 This involves an important theoretical problem which has greatly engaged the attention of modern sociologists and social psychologists, namely, the possibility of transferring co-operation and solidarity

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achieved in one context of social life to other social contexts.¹ Our data allow us to make the following observation on this point: co-operation and solidarity fashioned in the age-grades appear capable of being transferred to other social contexts because of two conditions which they satisfy. Co-operation and solidarity are not left to grow at random and, as it were, unconsciously; rather they are of a specific, *ad hoc*, type; they clearly formulate their purpose and operate in the sphere of distinct awareness. Moreover, age-grade co-operation is actuated in circumstances of psychologically impressive nature, i.e. in the context of religious experiences. But age-grade integration also admits its own limitation in that it avoids attempting to bridge over the deepest existing social gulfs, of local community and social class.

The second aspect of the preparation embodied in the age-grade system is the training of the adolescent, through discipline and certain concrete activities, in the tasks and duties which await him in adult life, and in the values and incentives which he will have to make his own. In the village this preparation represents a first step towards a final social career; in Bida it mostly implants in the mind of the adolescent values and incentives, as it were, *in abstracto*, without promising equally their fulfilment in later life. It teaches people who will never share in directing the fate of their country to appreciate, and make their own, the motives and values which govern the conduct of those who do. It imparts, if not claims to responsible citizenship, yet its spirit.

THE MEANING OF NUPE LIFE

If we compare Nupe religious teaching with the teaching implied in the age-grade system we find that the two educational institutions supplement each other in many respects and that, between them, they take in the whole field of 'education for citizenship'. The Mallam school offers promotion to one social plane; the age-grade association practises promotion in the framework of a complex scale of steps and grades. The promotion afforded by religious education is 'real', in the sense that it involves social privileges in adult life; that practised in the age-grades is fictitious, even vicarious, and concerns mental readiness rather than concrete achievements. Religious education, finally, creates a loosely organized professional group and at the same time fosters a much wider psychological unity, which embraces the whole of Nupe society, across tribal and class boundaries. The age-grades create an intensive solidarity, but only in a very narrow framework, and give tribal and class boundaries a wide berth. Common to both religious education and the age-grades is the social upward trend, the motive of rise and promotion. This upward trend appears indeed as the paramount motive in Nupe cultural life. If it is possible to reduce a whole culture to a single formula, to a fundamental unitary *ethos*, we find it in this *leitmotif* of

¹ Cf. F. C. Bartlett, in *The Study of Society*, 1939, p. 43: 'A specially interesting question is: if cooperation is established in one respect, when and how far does this help individual members of the groups concerned to cooperate in other respects?'

779 thought. He is a man-become-deity (though there is no pantheon
773 where he could find a niche), a national hero turned into an
ancestral being (though again, there are no named ancestors to
whose ranks he might be added). Tsoede is the ancestor only of a
line of kings; but in a wider and vaguer sense all Nupe within the
kingdom regard themselves with pride as his 'offspring', in the
sense, that is, that they were born in a country he founded and
made great and come of stock which, originally, lived under his
rule and supernatural protection. This protection, which still
endures, bears on certain problems of life which are resolved also
by means of other rituals or appeals to *Sokó*, namely, the ubiquitous
problems of illness and fertility. But these are only incidental
effects of Tsoede's mystic power; its main efficacy used to bear
on political interests—the maintenance of the 'king's law', the
punishment of criminals, and the protection of the 'King's High-
way' on the river Niger.¹ Even the 'incidental effects' of the
Tsoede cult are bound up with political interests, being embodied
in material objects which are at the same time the paraphernalia
of secular power. Let me only mention the 'Chain of Tsoede',
which is believed to cure the sterility of women but which was
formerly also used to strangle political offenders and to uncover
crimes in the manner of an ordeal.

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In brief, the Tsoede cult is essentially a State religion super-
imposed upon a pre-existing creed. The cult ties the people to
supernatural benefits granted not simply by God, nor by a God
who commands his own rituals, but by a God who listens to kings.
And its rituals, no longer 'owned' by communities or kin groups,
are aligned with the growth and pride of a nation.

5. THE NUPE COSMOS

779 I spoke before of the supererogatory character of certain Nupe
772 beliefs. In a sense, the greater part of Nupe doctrine has this
character. Consider that the Nupe hypothesize a deity who creates
the world and then leaves it to itself—uncertain, full of obscurity
and accident, and embracing good and evil in entirely fortuitous
measure. With such a conception of the relationship between
God and the world, the Nupe need not have speculated further
about some deeper meaning behind the features of the universe.
Anything that exists or happens in it would be sufficiently ex-
plained by that key concept of an aloof and non-ethical deity. One
might, for example, imagine a religion starting from the same
premisses which would leave all further explanations to the crude
realism of naïve common sense. Whether so unambitious a theo-

¹ See my article on the 'King's Hangmen' in *Man*, 1935, 143.

DIVINATION

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pairs of broadly contrasted categories of wide applicability and with four series of eight, which are relatively easy to remember. In interpreting these series, the diviner will always take into account whether his client is a man or a woman. Thus, if the sign to be interpreted belongs to series 1 (meaning 'success') and series 4 ('concerning women'), and occurs in the consultation of a man, the diviner will conclude that his client will be successful in finding a wife. If the same combination occurs in the case of a female client, it will probably mean that she will be prosperous in business. If the sign belongs to series 1 and 3 ('concerning men'), and occurs in the case of a male client, the latter will 'gain reputation and rank'. If the sign belongs to series 2 (meaning 'misfortune') and 4 ('concerning women') and occurs in the case of a female client, it might mean that she will have a difficult pregnancy, and so forth.

It is clear that in this flexible system of divination the diviner will be guided by the particular case of his client much more fully than is his pagan colleague; in fact, the system of divination itself acknowledges the importance at least of the sex of the client. Also, the diviner has several methods of calculation at his disposal and is free to choose the less complicated one provided it still offers a plausible prophecy. This is borne out by the existence of an optional, final rule which reduces the whole system of divination to a simple mechanical procedure. This rule lays down that all signs which have a single dot at the top and a double dot at the base, so that they 'point away' from the diviner, bear an adverse prophecy; while all signs of the opposite design, 'pointing inward', are propitious. If the diviner uses this simplified method exclusively he will consider only the 'houses' that bear on the client's question and phrase his reply accordingly. In a consultation I watched the diviner was asked if the client would recover some goods that had been stolen. The diviner looked at 'house' 2, meaning 'wealth', at 'house' 9, meaning 'voyage' (since the goods had been 'carried away'), at 'house' 12, 'enemy', and at 'houses' 13 and 14, implying 'success'. The signs at 2 and 13 were inconclusive; the signs at 9 and 12 pointed outward; only the sign at 14 had a propitious meaning. The answer was, quite plausibly, that it was no good looking for the thieves; the client might be successful if he could follow them; but this was difficult since they had by then left the town with their loot.

Perhaps the most striking feature of Nupe sand-divining is the contrast between its pretentious theoretical framework and its primitive and slipshod application in practice. In some respects the 'theory' simply evaporates in the 'practice', as in the high-sounding Arabic nomenclature which gives way to common Nupe

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1787 expressions or in the astrological notions of which no use is ever
 182 made. The practice is clearly meant to cope with the relevant
 178 problems and interests of Nupe social life; and these, let us note,
 are now typical, not only of a Mohammedan community, but also
 of a highly urbanized one. There is no longer any mention of rain,
 of the prospects of hunting, or of the influence of *kuti*; instead, we
 find references to 'writing and prayer', to mallams and barber-
 doctors, to 'the whole town in strife', and the strong emphasis on
 travel and trade, including travel and trade 'concerning women'.

The discrepancy between the theoretical framework of *hati* and
 its practical application suggests once more an attempt to assimilate
 the Mohammedan system to local conditions. The attempt is
 crude and unambitious, stopping far short of anything like a true
 synthesis; rather, any feature which cannot readily be assimilated
 is left on one side and only nominally acknowledged. Occasionally
 even this bare acknowledgement is discarded, as is shown in this
 example. One diviner, able to read his Arabic book on divination,
 discovered in it a new rule which distinguished between 'fixed' and
 'movable' stars and operated with series of seven and the corre-
 sponding permutations. The diviner frankly admitted that he did
 not fully understand the rule: consequently he simply ignored it,
 not even borrowing the new nomenclature.

7. CONCLUSIONS: DREAM INTERPRETATION

787 I have called the guidance offered by divination mechanical and
 of a case-to-case kind. The preceding discussion will have borne
 out this description. Nupe divination is concerned less with fore-
 knowledge in its own right than with resolving the problems and
 obscurities of the moment. The diviner can discover and disen-
 tangle some of the hidden influences which are at work always
 and everywhere, and can to that extent predict—piecemeal, and
 illuminating only the immediate future: he cannot uncover any
 more embracing design. Indeed, as we know, there is no such
 design in this non-committal and fundamentally amoral religion.
 Yet within the limits set to it divination has a part to play, pro-
 viding some of the certainty and guidance required for provident
 action. We may call Nupe divination a concession or compromise;
 for as its scope is so restricted by the logic of Nupe religious thought,
 the fact that it exists at all, is a concession exacted by the practical
 needs of human life.

Let us note that religion itself adds to these needs. We spoke of
 the 'proliferation' of Nupe religious thought which crowds the
 universe with supernatural agencies overlapping in their effects
 and multiplies the supernatural aids, so that their appropriateness

own right; and jokes or horseplay, which seem quite out of place, are inserted in the programme of 'merry-making'. If the dissociation were complete, the ritual would cease to be one and turn into a mere festivity. Normally, this is not permitted to occur; when economic stress or similar circumstances make it necessary to curtail the ritual performance, it is the 'merry-making' which is so shortened or even omitted altogether. But I have met with one instance of the opposite change. The people of Mokwa have a ceremonial called *elo* which has a great many of the essential features of the Nupe ritual: it has its 'month' (the 9th); a titled elder who has charge of it and can alone sanction the performance; and it employs masks and special dresses normally stored away and used on no other occasion. But it is without sacrifice, esoteric phase or prayer; nor is it (today at least) credited with any aim beyond *dsodzo*, 'play'. There is no evidence that the *elo* has been truncated for any particular reason; the evidence merely shows that the dissociation of the esoteric from the public episode can become complete, the latter coming fully into its own. 796^x

3. SYMBOLIC AND IMPLICIT FUNCTIONS

Normally, even the public episodes are permeated with significance or continue to convey the ideas primarily expressed in the esoteric rite. A familiar method of keeping ideas in sight is by means of signs or symbols, that is, by means of objects or ways of acting understood to point beyond themselves, to some 'referent' or *significatum*. This reference may be of a general kind, merely indicating that the situation is of a religious nature or part of a particular ceremonial. Think of the dress obligatory in the esoteric sacrifice but worn also during the public episodes, of the *gunnu* whips or the staves of the old men in the *dzakó*, of the yells or shouted words which are understood to be a salute of the *kuti*, or of the musical instruments which are known to belong to this or that ritual. These symbols, then, act as reminders that even the 'merry-making' has its peculiar, more solemn context. The symbols may be more specific reminders in that they refer to the professed meaning of the ritual performance. Thus the *gunnu* whips and the flogging indicate fertility; the masks of the *mamma* secrecy and a knowledge hidden from women and strangers; and the cult objects of Tsode stand for the whole past and unity of the tribe and kingdom. 796^x 182 ●

Symbols, of course, also play a part in the esoteric rites. The river water poured on the ground in the *ndáduma* indicates the character of this river ritual; the white cloth, annually renewed in the *gunnu*, signifies the 'end and renewal' sanctified in the cult;

x796 the freshly cut grain eaten in certain sacrifices points to subsistence
 ● 182 and the continuation of fertility which the ritual is meant to secure. The meaning of all these symbols is fairly obvious and in a sense 'natural', being based on a commonly known nexus between the sign and the thing signified. Symbols of a more artificial kind, resting on some specific and perhaps esoteric convention, are rare in Nupe ritual. The only clear instance is the symbolism of right and left in the *dzakó*, which, as I have said, has no parallel in any other Nupe cult. The sacrifice of fish in one version of the *gunnu* is a more doubtful case; for though fish are associated with fertility (in dream interpretation) and welcome gifts (in divining), that knowledge is far from general. The use of tortoise shells in the same ceremonial reminds the congregation of the Father Tortoise stories, but does no more. The rule that the *Ndazo* must not wear anything 'tied round his waist' evokes no association, say, with constraint inimical to growth and fertility. And though it may be tempting to speculate on the rule of calling the sacrificial beer 'water', that is, by the name of the fluid which (as rain or semen) is linked with the fertility of nature and man, the Nupe attach no ulterior meaning to this metaphor.

x796 Whether these and other details of the ritual procedure do not
 182 perhaps involve symbolisms of a more subtle and unconscious nature, I will not discuss. In my view uncomprehended 'symbols
 782 have no part in social enquiry; their social effectiveness lies in their capacity to indicate, and if they indicate nothing to the actors, they are, from our point of view, irrelevant and indeed no longer symbols (whatever their significance for the psychologist or psycho-analyst). But let us note that certain modes of acting may be significant for the actors without constituting symbols, merely because they represent a rule, a formalism of acting, that is, a *ritual*, and not accidental or random behaviour. This is true, for example, of the choice of the sacrificial animals. To begin with, they are in every case 'ordinary' animals, without sacred associations and neither rare nor avoided in workaday life. Though most rituals prescribe the sex of the sacrificial beast, males and females are chosen in random manner, suggestive of no symbolic link with the purpose of the ritual. The *ketsá* is perhaps the clearest example; the legend, as we remember, mentions the sacrifice of a cow; yet the actual ritual, when performed at the request of the, Kede chief, requires the killing of a bull. In other rituals the sex as well as the species of the animal simply depend on the outcome of divination. It might seem that at least the
 [822] specification of white or black animals, which is fairly common, must have a symbolic significance since black colour is generally associated with secrecy and evil things, and white colour with prosperity.

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prosperity. But again, both kinds are irregularly employed; all that can be said is that the sex, colour or species of the animals is *laid down*, and hence stands for a rule significant as such.

A few words must here be said about the whole conception of the Nupe sacrifice. It seems anomalous that a non-personified deity or an abstract 'cosmic force' should be offered food and drink. But the prayer formula accompanying the offering speaks concretely of 'giving' these to God or *kuti*, just as the name of at least one ritual implies that the *kuti* (or the stone representing it) 'drinks' the fluid offered. The name for sacrifice, *labá*, offers no further clue; denoting the actual offering as well as the prayer accompanying it, it does not separate the former from the general act of worship. The offering is thus a gesture among others: like the prayer formula, meant to break through the aloofness of the deity, the sacrificial gift serves to attract and hold his attention. In either case the gesture used is borrowed from everyday life, the prayer employing ordinary language, the sacrifice items normally offered by clients to patrons. And this conception of a 'normal' gift is once more consistent with the notion that the various *kuti*, precisely like persons of rank and standing, command their special 'greetings'. If the offerings are anomalous, they share this character with all the other forms of addressing God and *kuti* and indeed with the very conceptions of the deity and of the Force-that-is-in-ritual.

Let me note briefly that the same anomaly also holds in the case of sacrifices made to ancestors or over the vessels of 'great' medicines. The former, as we remember, are brought to the disembodied souls which are 'with God'; mostly, too, they are accompanied by invocations addressed at once to God and *kuci*. The sacrifices to medicines again involve the invocation of God; and though they consist in offerings of beer, morsels of food, and the blood of the sacrificial animal, they are, as we shall see, also understood to strengthen the impersonal force that is imputed to the substance of medicine. Nor are the offerings to spirits, de-humanized beings that they are, any less anomalous; indeed, in a different context I recorded the positive assertion that 'spirits do not eat'.

The first two observances may, like ritual proper, include the sacrificial meal of the congregation; the sacrifice to ancestors does so in most cases, the sacrifice to 'great' medicines only where it has fused with a *kuti* or with *kuci* worship. Invariably, however, the inclusion of the communal meal, even where it means merely a sharing-out of beer, entails the invocation of God, and not only of ancestors or of the 'force' of medicine. Yet the sacrificial meal has in no way the significance of a sacrament. The meal undoubtedly represents a sacred occasion, although it may show

x796 little trace of awe or emotional thrill.¹ But there is no conception
 • 182 of consuming things sacred in themselves and hence of sharing
 782 bodily a token of divinity. The crucial aspect of the sacrificial
 769 meal lies in the fact that here God and his worshippers eat and
 drink together; and if this is a symbolic act, its symbolism merely
 points to, and confirms, the 'fellowship and mutual social obligations'
 between deity and congregation. Much the same point was
 made by Robertson Smith in his discussion of the ancient semitic
 sacrifice, and I can do no better than quote from him: 'The one
 thing directly expressed in the sacrificial meal is that the god and
 his worshippers are *commensals*, but every other point in their
 mutual relations is included in what this involves. Those who sit
 at meat together are united for all social effects; those who do not
 eat together are aliens to one another, without fellowship in
 religion and without reciprocal social duties'.²

x796 Here we are no longer dealing with symbols in the strict sense of
 182 the word but with a new type of significance, bearing on things of
 183 very general social import and established by means of a relevant
 parallelism between the form of ritual and the norms governing
 social relationships. Before turning to this aspect let me mention
 another border zone of symbolism in ritual, where the symbolic
 function of modes of acting overlaps with their direct, causal,
 efficacy. The modes of acting, in other words, both 'point to' a
 state of affairs relevant to the aims of the ritual, and also cause
 this state of affairs to materialize. The instance I have in mind is
 the sexual taboo of the *gunnu*, followed by a period of licence.
 The fact that normal sexual relations are first suspended and after-
 wards conspicuously resumed must clearly focus attention upon
 sex and procreation, and upon the sequence of 'end' and 'new
 beginning'; so that this rule of acting comes to symbolize the
 central theme of the cult. Equally, however, the prohibition,
 rendered more severe by the provocation of the 'mixed dance',
 and its subsequent lifting produce both tensions and catharsis,
 and generally add to the stimulations generated in the ritual: and
 in this sense they simply engineer or create the required mood and
 expectations.

Generally speaking, then, strict (and comprehended) symbolism
 plays no great part in Nupe ceremonial. In a different sense, how-
 ever, all ceremonials operate with modes of acting which 'point
 beyond themselves' in a manner analogous to signs or symbols.
 They no longer serve merely as 'reminders', nor do they bear upon

¹ This is borne out by the usual translation of the Nupe word *bihl* into Hausa-Arabic; using the latter phraseology the Nupe would speak of *walima*, 'sacred feast'.

² *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, 1907, p. 269.

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or underline only the professed aims of the ritual; rather do they express additional aims in an implicit and incidental fashion. Consider that the ritual procedure acknowledges distinctions of rank and seniority (for example, in the order in which the congregation is seated and receives food and drink); that it draws a sharp line between those admitted to the esoteric ceremonials or to the ceremonial altogether (certain age sets, men, members of the community), and those excluded from it (other age sets, women, strangers). Again, among the youths admitted to the esoteric rite there are the novices and those already initiated, each group being expected to behave differently, to show fear or not, to teach or to be taught, and so forth. Among the women who may join the public phase the girls might have to keep apart from the old women, as in the *dzakó* dance. Both in the *gunnu* and *mamma* the leader of the age grades assumes the special duty of supervising and organizing the youths. And in all larger ceremonies there is some procession through the village, when one 'salutes' the houses of chiefs and elders.

Now all these instances refer to behaviour valid and meant to be valid also in everyday life. If, then, respect towards elders, awareness of one's place in the society, the very notion of being of it, are given expression in the ritual procedure, this comes to demonstrate, in the manner of a model, the obtaining social norms. Needless to say, it is a very special model since it is presented in the context of stirred-up emotions and to a consciousness artificially heightened. Rarely is this model also explained in so many words; nor does it seem necessary: the norms of ritual behaviour simply parallel or duplicate the norms of 'real' life in a conspicuous manner, the ritual mobilizing the group as it should normally function. And since this 'normality' is an aimed-at state and represents goals or values governing secular life, we may here speak of aims or functions super-added to the professed aims of the ritual, or, with Radcliffe-Brown, of 'social values' rendered visible in the ritual. The important thing is that they are rendered visible *incidentally*, being implicit in the procedure of a ritual overtly directed towards quite other aims. In other words, the form of the ritual adds to its content, and this tends to be cumulative, absorbing a variety of aims.

Yet though these represent ways of acting generally desirable and important in social life, the ritual, in virtue of its professed aims, has its own importance. So that one importance is sustained or thrown into relief by the other. This circle is true of most or all religious rituals. But let us note two things. The additional aims conveyed in the ritual need not be merely implicit in its procedure; they may equally be made explicit by formal pronouncements

x796 occurring in the course of the ceremonial. In Nupe, this is the case
 only in the *gunnu*. We remember the exclusion of barren women
 ● 182 from the public celebrations: this attitude is not merely left to
 183 emerge from the procedural rules but is also laid down in the
 form of an explicit warning voiced by the *gunnu* priest. Similarly
 the general obligation of respect towards elders and, especially, of
 sons towards their fathers is put into words, during the vigil in the
 bush, when the *ndakó gboyá* catechises the adolescents. Thus the
 Nupe can rightly say (in one of the *gunnu* songs) that the '*gunnu*
 teaches men', though in a more indirect fashion this would be true
 of all their rituals.

Furthermore, the 'desirable and important ways of acting'
 demonstrated in the ritual, implicitly or explicitly, may be held up
 as desirable and important in the ritual alone, not having the
 same weight in everyday life or not appearing in it at all. The
 ritual would then present, not a duplication or model, but some-
 thing else—an ideal rarely met with in practice or even a reversal
 of the practice. This is true in varying degree of four features of
 the Nupe ritual, all concerned with the relationship of the sexes.
 There is, first, the rigid exclusion of women from the esoteric rites,
 which sometimes goes together with intimidation and threats.
 Yet women play an important part in Nupe social life, in many
 ways equal to that of the men; many women are influential and
 wealthy, and ranks and titles are open to them.¹ In no sense are
 they the 'weaker' or more timid sex. If, then, it is 'important' in
 the ritual that women should be kept in their place and forcibly
 reminded of their inferiority, this seems to imply a redress of
 balance, a compensation for the loss of male prominence, and
 something in the nature of a wish-fulfilment. The issue seems con-
 spicuously summarized in the *mamna* ritual, which admits the
 power of women (since the 'medicine' employed is a woman's gift)
 yet is also meant to subdue and terrify them. The sex antagonism
 here apparent has a much wider bearing and will occupy us again
 in the discussion of witchcraft.

x796 Secondly, the ostracism of the childless woman in the *gunnu*,
 though it does not contradict the norms valid in 'real' life, greatly
 182 exaggerates them. The Nupe men will always moralize about the
 183 impropriety of contraception and the shameful conduct of mothers
 842 who behave as though they had no children, becoming professional
 traders and, incidentally, prostitutes; equally, everybody will
 decry the misfortune of barrenness. But the fact remains that a
 great many women, childless or not, happily live in this 'shameful'
 state and are able to choose it without necessarily incurring the

¹ For a fuller account of the position of the women, especially in the
 economic sphere, see *A Black Byzantium*, chap. IX.

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risk of divorce or even of their husbands' serious anger. The ritual alone seriously and publicly brands immorality or subjects barren women to a 'cure' which is indistinguishable from punishment. 182 ●
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Thirdly, the hectic mood of the *gunnu* dance is a model 'in reverse'. For this kind of abandoned behaviour is never permitted or thought of in ordinary life, and any open reference to sex is severely shunned by the rather prudish Nupe. Sex and privacy go together; and no ordinary dance permits a mingling of the sexes. 796^x
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Indeed, in all ordinary dances and in most ceremonial ones the whole mood is one of calm and restraint. Perhaps, then, we may call the *gunnu* (and one or two similar ceremonials) a safety-valve, a licensed compensation for otherwise rigid self-control; certainly, it puts a premium on a mode of behaviour otherwise not only improper but unthinkable.

The final instance, again taken from the *gunnu*, is of a slightly different order. I am referring to the masquerading of the boys as girls. 'Masquerading' is possibly too strong a word, for all that happens is that the boys wear a piece of woman's cloth.¹ But this aspect of the *gunnu* dress is always specifically mentioned, and in the general dance the boys are encouraged to imitate and caricature female steps and mannerisms. Now in 'real' life boys or men are never expected to behave like the opposite sex. From the time when children put on any dress at all (when they are about six or seven), they are dressed differently. As soon as the boys form themselves into the earliest age grade (at the age of eight or nine), the occupations, interests, and codes of conduct of the sexes differ sharply, and this is true also of songs, dances, and pastimes of all kinds. Male homosexuality, which would blur this dividing line, is severely condemned and, in fact, denied to occur. The exceptional behaviour at the *gunnu* thus appears to have a symbolic significance (though it is not stated more explicitly), the temporary change of roles pointing to a more permanent one. The boys who are admitted to the *gunnu* are on the threshold of manhood, the very admission to the ritual being a first token of the new status. Before that they were something else—children, still looked after by their mothers as much as by their fathers, and being with women more often than with men. Later, this ambiguous position will come to an end, which change roughly coincides with admission to the *gunnu*. The symbolic identification with the female sex on that occasion thus emphasizes the transition through concentrating it into something like 'a last time' when boys can be confused with girls. It is not literally a 'last time'; for even before this event boys did not walk about dressed like girls or behaved 796^x
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¹ In the *gani* ceremonial, to be described later, this 'masquerading' is much more elaborate and definite (see below, p. 218).

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x796 like them; and after the first admission to the *gunnu* there will be repetitions of the same ceremonial and masquerade. The *gunnu* thus exaggerates the change of roles and presents it in a manner
 ● 182 not exactly true to life; but just because it does so it becomes a
 183 means of dramatizing a crucial crisis of life which, in reality, is
 881 neither as conspicuous nor as dramatic. So that the *gunnu*, through this part of its procedure, assumes the relevance of a *rite de passage*.

x796 To summarize. By its professed content, the ritual applies and partly affirms the system of religious ideas; and by its form, it
 182 becomes part of the machinery which maintains the efficient
 183 working of a society of a given structure. By its form, too, the ritual 'accumulates' further aims and ideas, bearing on codes of conduct, on social roles, and hence on the values of 'good' and 'bad'. Surveying all the various Nupe rituals we find that the *gunnu*, as it is considered the paramount ritual, so it is also the richest in 'cumulative' content. There is practically no manner of acting which is not referred to and evaluated in its procedure; furthermore, the *gunnu* alone goes beyond implicit references and contains also express pronouncements upon these 'additional' aims.

As I previously tried to show, it is not paradoxical that a cult of such far-reaching importance should be the first to disappear or to be truncated under the pressure of change; rather, its very ambitiousness exposes it 'on too many sides' to disruptive influences. Let me rephrase this assertion in terms of the 'content' and 'form' of rituals. The disappearance or radical alteration of the ritual clearly implies some weakening of its appeal. The professed content of the ritual would lose its appeal only if the whole conceptual framework of the religion were disrupted, as it would be by the impact of another religion, in this case Islam. Yet this was certainly not true (or not yet true) of the many Nupe communities where the *gunnu* alone of all the various rituals had disappeared or broken down. The form of the ritual, however, since it absorbs so many of the general norms of social life, would be weakened by any change affecting the latter, by any remodelling of the relationship between the generations, by any new attractions seducing the younger people, and by all changes in moral or educational standards. It is precisely dislocations of this kind which have spread most widely through Nupe country; and it is thus the *gunnu* carrying within its 'form' a mirror of the traditional way of life, lost its appeal and indeed its very relevance as its picture ceased to be true.

764 relevance in Nupe social life.¹ And we should have to assume
 184 further, to account for the loss of mystic appeal, that Islam has
 radically altered the Nupe view of life and death; which, as we
 shall see, is once more untrue.

5. SOLEMNIZATIONS AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

- 182 There is no need to point to the close affinity of the ceremonials surrounding birth, marriage, and death, with the rituals of more general religious bearing. Both operate with the same elements—private (or esoteric) invocations, libations, communal meals, and public 'merry-making' in the concluding phase. Both, too, conspicuously involve numerical calculations defining the occasion and sequence of rites. The congregations, of course, differ, though there is some overlap; for certain *kuti*, like the solemnizations, mobilize the kin group only, while at the funerary rites of men of standing all the dignitaries of the community will be represented. Like the *kuti*, finally, the ceremonials surrounding the crises of life have their implicit as well as their professed aims. The latter could not be 'professed' more clearly. The *sunu* is there to name the infant in solemn fashion, and hence to assign to it its future place in the society while at the same time invoking divine protection; the wedding ceremonial sanctifies the union of man and wife and holds out the promise of progeny; and the funeral ceremonial disposes of the dead while one prays that there may be no further deaths; it imposes mourning as well as cancels it, and thus repeats or dramatizes, in the ritual sequence, the endless cycle of human existence. We have, I think rightly, called these rituals solemnizations; for they hallow all these events through relating them with the supernatural. But they do more. Through the form they take, that is, through the manner in which the rituals mobilize their particular congregations, they also express the principles and values governing the structure of the society. Think of the rules assigned to the father and grandfather in the ceremonial of birth, the former being expected to collect the 'medicines' needed for an easy confinement and to consult the diviner, the latter to announce the new-born's name. Or think of the complicated exchange of gifts which concludes the marriage ceremonial, of the double sacrifice in the bride's and the bridegroom's house, and of the selection of the bridegroom's envoys and the bride's companions. The funerary rites throw into relief both the social distinctions that go with sex,

¹ I am here referring to status in the society at large, i.e. to the access to rank and office open only to older men and to the respect they generally command, not to the kinship authority of family heads; the latter has indeed been weakened (see pp. 83, 351.)

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age, and status and the varying degrees of kinship; even so specific a feature as joking relationship is built into the ceremonial. 182 •

Now, with a few exceptions—the role of friends in the marriage ceremonial, of age grades in marriage or funerals, and of rank-holders in the funerary rites,—the relationships mobilized in these rituals are kinship relationships; and through being mobilized in a sacred context, they are in turn affirmed and sanctioned. That the implicit efficacy of these rituals should serve to sustain the group based on kinship seems to fit the nature of the events so solemnized, which themselves primarily concern the kinship group. But these events do not only 'concern' the kinship group as, say, rain or fertility concern the village community; they punctuate its life and in fact determine its existence, that is, they create and renew it, birth and marriage replenishing the group and death depleting and re-ordering it. So that the circle is complete, the ritual 'content' and 'form' sustaining one another and, in a sense, coinciding. For the solemnization of these crucial events employs (and hence affirms) the very relationships brought into being by the events; and the professed aims of the ceremonials bear on the perpetuation of the human aggregate which their procedures serve to hold together.

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Most of these medicines, then, are 'multifarious', combining a therapeutic with a mystical or 'magical' efficacy. The latter may even be paramount and take an extreme form, as in the medicines efficacious by their mere presence and of unknown composition. Equally, these medicines are treated as 'magical'. They may only be prepared in certain months and not in others, unlike all other medicines; and while the latter are kept in the usual household containers, gourds or ordinary pots, the hereditary medicines are preserved in special earthen vessels, placed apart and decorated in the manner of sacred objects, with a strip of white cloth, a ring of palm-fronds or a crown of white chicken feathers. They all have mystically obscure names and more or less elaborate *emisa*, and some also involve regular sacrifices, either when the *cigbe* is newly prepared or on the occasion of the usual kinship rites and invocations of ancestral *kuci*. Finally, all these medicines are extremely secret and never sold for money, if indeed they are disposed of at all; if so, they may be given away only to close relations or perhaps friends, as a free gift 'for the sake of God'. Nor is their recipe (even if it is known) ever taught to others. 755

The special position of the hereditary *cigbe* is reflected in the nomenclature, for these medicines alone merit the epithet 'great', while all other medicines are called 'little'. Let us note that the verbal distinction refers, not so much to the miraculous effects with which the *cigbe* is credited, as to the procedure it sets in motion; for even a 'great' medicine may only cure headache or stomach trouble, at least with part of its efficacy. But the 'great' medicine alone involves proper acts of worship; and as it is bound up with the identity of kin groups through being hereditary, so it serves as a focus of kinship life, affording its supernatural aid primarily or even exclusively to the group to which it belongs and mobilizing it in the fashion of kinship rituals. The 'greatness' of the *cigbe*, then, lies in its social implications rather than in its concrete efficacy. Let us note also that its very 'ownership' is far from concrete. For the *cigbe* whose composition is unknown is also never examined, being renewed only from the beer and blood of the sacrifice. What is truly 'owned', is not any tangible, physical substance but only the vessel in which it is supposed to exist; so that this becomes a shrine for religious ministrations indistinguishable from ritual proper. 755 182 ●

3. THE FAITH IN MEDICINE

The distinction between 'great' and 'little' medicines is drawn only by the practitioners and 'owners' of *cigbe*. The bulk of the people know little about these implications, and so grade the 755 184

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monial be repeated, at least year by year, but each performance does no more than restrain the evil machination of witches. When I asked if the *ndakó gboyá* society, given its former power, could suppress witchcraft altogether, the answer was invariably the same: '*u jì táimako*', 'it would help'. As in the belief in the *Lelu*, the Nupe expect their anti-witchcraft magic only to keep down witchcraft, 'so that it would not be too bad'. If the Nupe knew our saying about poverty they would no doubt say that witchcraft, like the poor, will always be with us; all man can hope to do is to keep it within reasonable bounds. 794

7. ON THE MEANING OF WITCHCRAFT

The discussion has led us back to a question previously raised— Why should there be this stubborn belief in witchcraft? I am not now referring to the ascription of witchcraft to women or to particular individuals and personalities, but to the notion of witchcraft as such which underlies these specific ascriptions, that is, to the basic premiss that some mystic power of evil is simply given and ultimately ineradicable. As regards the specific ascription of witchcraft in Nupe thought, we explained it as a projection or displacement of hatreds and aggressive desires from the sphere of rational social life into one mystically sanctioned. We may now add that, through such projection and displacement, the doctrine of witchcraft both permits anxieties to become articulate (if in fantasy language) and shows them an outlet, or scapegoat. Other scholars have viewed witchcraft beliefs in much the same light.¹ And they would agree also with this calculation of the 'gain and cost of witchcraft' (to quote Kluckhohn's suggestive phrase). The individual gains inasmuch as he is shown a legitimate outlet for his frustrations and tensions, legitimate since the society has licensed the aggressive talk and action through which the frustration and tension are relieved or 'ab-reacted' (as psychiatrists would say). And society gains inasmuch as the 'ab-reaction' is not random but canalized; indeed, society utilizes the very mode of ab-reaction in turning it into an attack upon behaviour and character traits held undesirable. 754^x 182 •

None of these explanations, however, touches upon that premiss of 'witchcraft as such'. The former concern, essentially, the social canalization of anxieties, frustrations, tensions, hatreds, into variants of the belief in witchcraft. And these will depend on the make-up of the given society or culture: while in Nupe certain features of the social structure seem to be the determinants, in

¹ See C. Kluckhohn and D. Leighton, *The Navaho*, 1946, pp. 172-81.

*754 other societies, differently organized, different factors might prove
 182 relevant (for example, among the Navaho, the smallness of the group, envy of wealth, and irregular, autocratic leadership).¹ But might it not be that the whole belief in witchcraft (of any kind) is similarly a variant, one of several possibilities of canalizing anxieties and tensions, which would once more depend upon something in the make-up of cultures? It must be so, since there exist societies (if few in number) which are without this kind of belief even though they are not without conflicts or tensions. And it must be so also for another reason.

Granted that suppressed hatreds, unresolved conflicts, and the like occur in most (or all) societies, they could surely be offered adequate relief by means other than beliefs in witchcraft. The hatreds and the persecution of aliens; licensed occasional outbursts of hectic excitement; or the licensed aggression of war or of sectional combats, are familiar instances; all three also occur in Nupe. It may of course be that they offer insufficient relief, or themselves add further anxieties or tensions. But there is no way of measuring the potential of these different chances of relief; we cannot compare them and say 'each can only do so much', as we might say of the lack of vitamins in one kind of food that it must be made good by their presence in another. If the incidence of neuroses and other psychopathological derangements is an index of unrelieved mental tensions, then the reliefs just mentioned are indeed 'not enough' in Nupe; but they are not enough even combined with witchcraft beliefs. However this may be, witchcraft beliefs exist *although* there are these other possibilities of relieving tensions; which is true not only of Nupe but of most societies in the world. We must conclude that they have a *raison d'être* of their own, apart from that implied in the psychological mechanism of projection, displacement, and the rest: which *raison d'être*, as I have suggested, must lie in 'something in the make-up of cultures' (of most cultures).

*754 In a paper written many years ago I attempted to formulate
 182 that reason. As I now know, I was wrong; my attempt was vitiated,
 114 above all, by the fact that I had considered Nupe witchcraft in isolation from the rest of the religious system. But since my error too is instructive, may be allowed to repeat here the main argument.² I argued that religious faith, if it clings naively to the promises of religion—of guidance as to how to act; of supernatural or divine protection if that guidance is followed; and of some ultimately just and benevolent order of things—must on occasion face failure. For only too often are these promises belied, by

¹ Op. cit., pp. 174, 177, 178-9.

² See *Africa*, vol. VIII, pp. 444-5.

disease, sudden death, misfortune, injustice, that is, by the evil things in the world. Thus in all religions there are attempts to justify or resolve, or to dismiss as merely apparent, this contradiction of promise and fulfilment. The attempts vary in philosophical refinement. The religious doctrine may, in the vein of stoic philosophy, explain the presence of evil as a foil for the visibility of the good; or it can make the evil things, like the sufferings of Job, a touchstone of faith; or it may lay their cause into the imperfection of man, so that his sins (willed or not, actual or intended) are behind the apparent failures of divine providence. Or finally, and more crudely, the religion may contain a loophole within itself, admitting a province where evil is simply allowed to reign. The devil of naïve belief is one embodiment of this loophole-idea; the witch another.

It is true that the belief in the evil actions of witches bears only upon a narrow variety of that abstract 'evil in the world' meant by philosophers or theologians. Even so, the 'loophole' remains. Let us remember also that the belief in witches safeguards itself from being 'found out' and proved or refuted by empirical means; in embracing this incontrovertible belief, then, religious faith itself is safeguarded from being found illusory and refuted by reality. Speaking practically, the acceptance of witchcraft (or of the devil) saves the believer from false hopes or disillusion; speaking philosophically, the acceptance of an ultimate X within the divinely ordered universe saves that order. Admitting that there is a province where the believed-in guidance and protection do not fully reach, we save the belief in laws to guide us and in that promise of protection. Witchcraft, in brief, is a chapter in apologetics, albeit crudely written.

So far my original conclusions (somewhat paraphrased). Now though they are, I believe, correct for other systems of religious belief, they do not seem to apply to Nupe religion. Granting that beliefs in witchcraft can save faith in a divine order of the universe, in Nupe religion, there is nothing of the kind to save; if in other societies or cultures there must be the admission of that ultimate X to account for, or explain away, the failure of religious guidance and promise of protection, in Nupe, this guidance and promise have never been offered. Nupe religion, as we know, admits accidents at every step; it promises only fallible guidance and protection; the observances or ethical rules it upholds are not meant to be counted upon against the many evils which are also in the world—malevolent spirits, diseases, uncontrollable misfortune. Indeed, the deity himself has put them in the world and suffers them to exist, being unconcerned with the fate of his creation. Why, then, should there be this further, 'special

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assumption of the evil of witchcraft? The problem which it might serve to solve simply does not exist.

Yet there remains another problem, requiring a kindred solution. With the admission of accident, with the conception of an unpredictable and amoral universe, the problem of the presence of evil is solved intellectually or, at least, argued away on the intellectual plane. But this solution leaves an emotional gap. For I hold that there is a deeply seated desire for certainty, which demands satisfaction of an essentially emotional kind, that is, the awareness that the world is not only certain, but concerned with you—your fate, your happiness. And where this demand is refused (as in Nupe) anxieties and frustrations must again arise and press for some ab-reaction and solution. But now those other outlets which might relieve the pent-up tension, through random acts of aggression or some explosive catharsis, would prove inadequate; they would take care of the symptoms but not of the conflicts from which these spring. Nor can the disturbance of the longed-for certainty be overcome save by discovering the disturber; the vague dissatisfaction with an abstract state of affairs must be capable of crystallizing into the accusations of concrete agents. Above all, there must be the chance of practical action, so that the people aware of the threat also have the satisfaction of dealing with it. In other words, precisely because you know that the world around you holds out no promise of certainty nor any supreme design, you conjure up an arch-enemy with whom at least you can reckon, on whom you can vent fears and hatreds, and over whom you may hope to triumph) be it Satan or the witch.

The witch is, perhaps, less of an arch-enemy, since only some of the evils of the world can be laid at her doorstep. Yet the conjured-up picture of human beings who are unaccountably evil and unaccountably cause death and disease does take care of a portion of the uncertainty in the world. Now, we previously said that the admission of a province of life where the benevolent design of the universe does not reach saves the faith in that universe: this clearly does not apply. We must now say—the admission of a province of life where malevolent forces can be defined (and attacked), makes it possible to bear a universe devoid of such design. To be sure, this is no longer our 'loophole' theory; but it is as it were its photographic negative, or the same mathematical formula with all pluses changed into minus signs. Crudely speaking, you may have a God of Justice and Mercy, naïvely conceived, and devils or witches in the background; or you may have an Idle God, remotely in the background, but at least devils or witches to grapple with.

That the notion of witchcraft may arise from such opposed con-

ceptions is, I think, borne out by the history of witchcraft beliefs in our own civilization. For these flourished both when faith was naive and when it was weakened by the first scientific revolution. Science, of course, did not attack certainty at large; rather, it opened the vista of new laws and a new order governing the universe. But it destroyed the subjective certainty, that emotionally satisfying awareness of a universe concerned with man. So that this sudden loss revived the search for some arch-enemy.¹ Among the Nupe, it was not a question of a sudden loss; they had misconstrued their universe from the first.

One final comment. The preceding discussion may seem to imply that the belief in witchcraft serves to maintain or 'save' a state of affairs worth maintaining and saving; previously too, we argued that witchcraft beliefs and practices 'attack undesirable behaviour', 'resolve conflicts', and 'relieve tensions and anxieties'. One might conclude that societies can do no better than foster beliefs in witchcraft, and that our balance sheet of their 'gains and cost' must show a heavy credit side. Such views are sometimes expressed; it has been pointed out, for example, that witchcraft beliefs provide a 'harmless outlet in imagination for impulses forbidden in real life;' that they direct aggressiveness 'into socially non-disruptive channels' and so resolve 'the problem that every society faces: how to satisfy hate and still keep the core of society solid'.²

Let me stress that I presumed no such absolute utility of witchcraft beliefs. I suggested that they resolve certain conflicts or problems: but I did not say that this is a 'good' solution or a final one. The aggression invited by witchcraft beliefs is as harmful as anything a society can produce in the way of 'disruptive' practices; the relief offered by witch-hunting and witch-punishing is no more than temporary and their capacity to allay anxieties no more than illusory: for if witchcraft beliefs resolve certain fears and tensions, they also produce others. Nor is there anything unique in this. If witchcraft beliefs represent a very imperfect 'solution', cultures are full of similarly shortsighted reliefs and spurious correctives. In a sense, the remedies are always better than the complaints; for they enable individuals to go on living and societies to go on functioning without having to face the task, often impossible of achievement, of completely re-fashioning the social system. But they are the kind of remedy which both becomes

¹ Cf. this passage from H. Butterfield: 'It would appear to be the case that astrology, like witch-burning, was considerably on the increase in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in spite of what we say about the beginning of modern times' (*The Origin of Modern Science*, 1949, p. 21).

² C. Kluckhohn and D. Leighton, op. cit., pp. 173, 177.

*754 a drug and poisons the system. Or, to change the metaphor, we may
● 182 liken witchcraft beliefs to a safety valve: but let us be clear that
the engine which needs it has been badly constructed; nor is the
safety valve itself safe.

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2. ON MOTIVES

We turn to our crucial problem, the motives underlying these adoptions and rejections of alien observances. Since in our examples both responses were voluntary, not imposed by extraneous pressure or constraint, we may legitimately argue that the acceptance must have rested upon some appeal, some kind of pull, which the novel practice exercised upon the recipients-to-be, and the rejection upon the lack of such an appeal or perhaps its opposite. This 'appeal' or 'pull' is clearly a complex thing. First and foremost, it is a pull of interest; in other words, we may search for some specific interest or 'need' pre-existing in the recipient culture, which the novel practice seems capable (or incapable) of satisfying.¹ The relevant factor, however, is not the pre-existing interest or need as such, but a residual interest or need; what we must show is not so much that the society is deeply concerned over such-and-such issues (for example, the fecundity of women) but that this concern is unsatisfied even where it is met by pre-existing institutions. The *gugu* ceremonial, for example, answers interests strongly pronounced in Nupe life in the fixed rituals promising communal well-being, and in the ritualization of death; but since a series of traditional ceremonials profess the same aims, the residual interest must be small, if it is felt at all. The concern over childbirth, on the other hand, is by its nature such that it would always remain active and press for additional promises or safeguards.

The concern or aim of the alien observance may obviously be expressed in a form more or less novel and unprecedented; and the degree of novelty must clearly itself affect the ease of adoption. But this effect is difficult to assess. Often, we shall no doubt argue that, the more novel a practice, the more uncongenial must it be to people still thinking in terms of traditional ways of acting; so that the novelty would act as a brake upon the free play of interests, as a counter-pull as it were. Yet we cannot exclude the possibility that the novelty of the practice will help rather than hinder the adoption; for its 'uncongenial' form may itself correspond to some pre-existing interest, that is, to a diffuse desire for unusual and unprecedented experiences. Now all the alien religious practices which the Nupe have adopted contain some 'uncongenial' or unprecedented features. Shall we then say that the latter must have exercised a certain appeal in their own right? Perhaps—though

¹ The term 'pre-existing' is here used in a somewhat loose sense, without the implication of precise chronological evidence. It implies, however, that the interest or need in question can be established independently, that is, can be shown to obtain apart from the adopted (or rejected) practice.

771 varying combination and interplay. I have tried to tabulate the
 177 relevant data in the form of a synoptic chart capable of exhibiting
 182 the multiple correlations. The features listed are those discussed
 above, plus and minus signs indicating their presence and absence
 respectively. I also attempted to grade the interests satisfied by the
 various cults by doubling the plus signs in the appropriate cases; a
 similar grading of 'congeniality' seemed irrelevant in the light of
 the final result.

	(I) <i>Integration of donors and recipients</i>	(SD) <i>Status dis- tinction operating against donors</i>	(C) <i>Congen- iality of form</i>	(SI) <i>Satisfaction of interest</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
<i>bori</i>	-	±	-	+ (as thera- peutic measure)	Rejection
<i>gugu</i>	+	+	-	+ ? (pleasur- able novelty)	Rejection
<i>gani</i> <i>sogba</i> (fertility cult)	+	-	-	++	Adoption
(general cult)	-	+	-	++	Adoption
<i>elo</i>	-	+	-	-	Rejection
	-	-	-	+ ? (pleasur- able novelty)	Adoption
<i>Tscede</i> <i>idols</i>	-	-	-	++	Adoption

In other words, adoption (of a voluntary kind) occurred when

$I \pm \dots SD \pm \dots C - \dots SI ++$

and when

$I - \dots SD - \dots C - \dots SI +.$

That a strong interest should outweigh the absence of congeniality and render the factor of integration irrelevant is hardly surprising; but it is puzzling that this should be true also where the interest appears to be small and even uncertain (as in the *elo*). Perhaps, then, we have underrated the residual 'need'? If so, it must have sprung from some inadequacy in the pleasures and excitements afforded in the pre-existing situation. Although this

assumption cannot, for obvious reasons be fully substantiated, it is not altogether unwarranted. Mokwa and the other communities practising the *elo* are in fact poor in ceremonials offering, apart from occasions for worship, also the purely pleasurable stimulations of dancing, singing, and conviviality; for while most Nupe communities have two or three ceremonials of this kind, Mokwa has only one apart from the *elo*—the *gunnu*,—the remaining rituals being sober esoteric sacrifices, unaccompanied by music, dancing, and public 'merry-making'.¹ We mentioned in a previous context that the number of fixed ceremonials is fairly uniform throughout Nupe;² we may now add that the proportion of ceremonials of such combined appeal is similarly uniform. This I take to indicate that the Nupe need for regular pleasurable stimulations has as it were found its own level. Which would mean, further, that Mokwa and the other communities were only balancing a psychological deficit when they adopted the *elo*. Certainly, several of the communities which exhibit the normal Nupe level of ceremonial-*cum*-pleasurable occasions had an equal chance of embracing the *elo* or of copying the similar *gugu*, but have not done so. So that the adoption, by a few groups, of the alien ceremonial for no motive other than that of adding another festivity did yet answer an unsatisfied 'need'.

But let us note a final source of error. We have spoken of the 'pre-existing' interests or needs as though they were bound to be constant, the measure of their satisfaction alone being variable. It is conceivable that this assumption is unwarranted, and that the adoption of the new observance reflects, not a pre-existing interest unsatisfied, but an interest strengthened owing to some change in social conditions. As regards the *elo* and *sogba*, there is no evidence to support this alternative hypothesis. It is, however, borne out in the case of the *gani*. This ceremonial, as I put it before, improves upon the traditional Nupe institutions which ritualize adolescence and age-grade life; it dramatizes these events in a specific and detailed manner where the equivalent traditional ceremonial, the *gunnu*, merely deals summarily with the transition from youth to adulthood, embodying it as one aspect among others in its design. Now, though the age grades have undoubtedly always served to mirror the dominant interests of Nupe life, in rank and in promotion in status, the interests themselves must have gained in

¹ The same is true of Rabah, though there Mohammedan influence has today obliterated the *gunnu*. Gbajibo, the third community practising the *elo*, has two other ceremonials which combine religious with generally pleasurable stimulations, the *gunnu* and the *mamma*; but the latter is celebrated in secrecy, by the men alone, and only as a movable ritual.

² See above, p. 70.

771 importance with the growth of the Fulani Emirate. As the latter
 177 gave greater impetus to desires for a political career and imparted
 182 greater severity to the competition for rank and status, so the age
 grades assumed a novel, and more weighty, significance. With
 this, the fuller and more specific ritual elaboration of adolescence
 seems entirely consistent. It was not so that the pre-existing
 desire to give ritual elaboration to important things had been
 inadequately expressed; rather, things became important in a new
 way: so that, when the Nupe adopted the *gani* ceremonial, they
 were seizing upon a chance to express a changed outlook and a
 desire reoriented.

As we shall see, the more far-reaching conversion to Islam similarly involves such changing interests and newly emerged trends. Are then, perhaps, any trends visible in Nupe today which may in future lead to further adoptions of alien practices? I will hazard this prediction. The pressure of competition and the obsession with promotion in status, grown strongest in the capital, are visibly leading to anxieties and frustrations, and to mental instability. The incidence of neurotic disorders seems to bear out this tendency, though inadequate records forbid a more definite statement.¹ The mass hysteria of the witchcraft trial mentioned before offers clearer evidence. Such increased tensions may well seek relief in some form of self-abandonment: the *bori* possession cult seems to offer precisely this chance, which might one day be seized upon, its 'uncongenial' appeal notwithstanding.

3. THE CHARACTER OF TRIBAL RELIGION

771 The preceding discussion referred only to the adoption of iso-
 177 lated practices and items of belief but made no mention of individuals or communities wholly converted to an alien pagan creed. Nor is this unexpected. The religions of pre-literate peoples are not normally of a proselytizing kind. They promise no particular reward to the converted, nor do they place any premium on the conversion of others. Indeed, it seems true to say that this issue never arises, for, as we anticipated, primitive religion is essentially a tribal or national religion, conceived of as inseparable from the particular identity of the group professing it. Expressed differently, primitive religion does not constitute a 'church' which exists in its own right and can be entered (or left) solely by reason of its creed and of the transcendental benefits promised to the believers.²

¹ See *A Black Byzantium*, p. 402.

² Durkheim's famous identification of 'religion' (of any form) with a 'church' seems to me to rest on an arbitrary use of the latter term; for whatever else may be meant by a 'church', it must mean 'a community organized

forced upon the people, from others that followed spontaneously. 177
 What was forced upon the people was essentially a total situation, at once political, economic, and religious; any step may be the first, nor need the others follow immediately.¹ Only theoretically can we conclude that they all hang together, though occasionally we can trace the nexus more firmly, even into the future, towards adjustments yet to come.

Let me illustrate this on an example bearing on the widest efficacy of Islam, its very success in proselytizing the Nupe. Coming as it did as a religion of conquerors and ruling class, it both endorsed the social barrier and provoked attempts at overcoming it. In keeping conversion loose and easy, and in utilizing the emphasis on learning, which, on an elementary level, was widely accessible, the Nupe turned Islam into a means of social mobility. But the result, a religious division cutting irregularly across the society, even across single communities, clearly presented new problems; and their solution took the form of a 'remodelling of the model'. The ('unorthodox') tolerance of Nupe Moslems towards pagans is one such reaction to a cleavage which, if it were allowed to retain its sharpness, would break up every community. Another, though it occurs in one case only, lies in that 'religious division of labour' between Moslems and pagans which we recorded from Kutigi. But consider also that the spreading of Islam must tend to obscure the class barrier which it formerly sustained and on which Nupe society is still based; and if one day Islam sweeps the whole country, that problem will arise with even greater acuteness. To some extent the commonly accepted distinction between grades of mallams tends to preserve or re-establish the class barrier; for the 'knowledge' which makes the 'true' mallam is more readily accessible to the leisured and wealthy than to the craftsman or peasant. However, the full consequences of this conflict are not yet visible. Indeed, we cannot predict if the conflict itself will stay; for extraneous changes (political or economic) may well weaken or remove the class barrier. Yet if it remains, the model of Islam might again show the solution, its sectarianism offering the possibility of diverse and even opposed religious alignments.

So much for the processes of change and 'contact'. As regards 177
 that end-state, it has become almost a dogma of many anthropologists that it always represents a unique cultural situation, 182
 something in the nature of a '*tertium quid*' which has no precise

¹ This should be taken literally. I found communities still observing the *gunnu*, where the economic co-operation of the large family group had disappeared (e.g. Doko or Mokwa); while in others, which had abandoned the *gunnu*, the old system of inheritance was only beginning to break down (e.g. Lemu).

177 antecedents in the 'parent cultures' and invariably amounts to
 182 more than a mere 'fusion or mixing'. Rather, 'the clash and inter-
 play of two cultures produce new things'.¹ In cultural changes 'old
 elements are abandoned and new ones developed in close and con-
 stant relation to the existing configuration'.² To quote Herskovits'
 summing up of this school of thought: these scholars hold that 'the
 arithmetic of culture contact is never a process of addition. . . .
 A culture of multiple origins is different from any bodies of tradi-
 tion that have contributed to it. The dynamics of acculturation
 . . . are creative.'³ In the terms of our subject matter we should
 have to admit that Nupe-Islam is not so-and-so much Nupe
 religion plus so-and-so much Islam but a fundamentally novel
 phenomenon, unprecedented, integrated, self-contained.

Now the processes we outlined, devious, piecemeal, involving
 partial adjustments and often unstable compromise, make it clear
 that their end-result is indeed a 'new thing'. Yet equally they
 suggest that it is not, at any stage, fully integrated or self-con-
 tained. Whichever way we understand 'integration', or for that
 matter its antithesis, the mere 'fusion or mixing', no summary
 judgment of this kind is possible.

Taken at its most concrete meaning, the integration of a cultural
 item in a new setting would imply that the respective modes of
 behaviour are performed regularly and in predictable situations.
 But clearly there are degrees of this regularity. The Moslem *salla*
 or the pseudo-Moslem *navū* represent fully regular, predictable
 modes of behaviour; so do the Fast of Ramadhan, the daily
 prayers, and the observance of alms-giving. But Moslem-style
 divination or medical practices, the Moslem solemnization of kin-
 ship events, and the Moslem rules of preferential marriage, are
 much less regular and predictable. They represent ways of acting
 which people may or may not choose, having become established
 only as cultural 'alternatives', to borrow Linton's phrase.⁴ The
 visits to the mosque are even more irregularly observed, while the
 concern with Islamic mythology or theology is purely sporadic if
 not exceptional.

Nor is the picture more uniform when we understand 'inte-
 gration' to mean, more abstractly, a firm fit between the originally
 alien elements of culture and their new setting. This fit can only be
 of three kinds: it may be one of purpose, the alien elements ex-
 hibiting some rationally intelligible utility or appropriateness in
 the new setting; or it may be visible in the logical consistency

¹ B. Malinowski, *The Dynamics of Culture Change*, 1945, pp. 21, 25.

² R. Linton, *The Study of Man*, 1936, p. 360.

³ M. J. Herskovits, *Man and his Work*, 1948, p. 534.

⁴ Op. cit., p. 273.

obtaining between the two; or the 'fit' may be psychological, in that the old and new modes of behaviour exhibit the same emotional 'tone' or 'ethos'.¹

Undoubtedly, there is evidence for the nexus of utility or appropriateness, even though its character varies widely. The great ceremonials of Islam conspicuously serve political interests and the regulation of adolescence; equally they have been fitted into the cycle of routine and recreation. The daily prayers, the fast, and alms-giving have no such momentous part to play; yet precisely because they are inconsequential and depend on private decisions alone, they have come to exemplify adherence to the new creed in a manner both conspicuous and easy to assume. In other words, they serve as distinguishing marks, as badges of Islam, much as do the turban or other suggestive items of dress. Yet worship in the mosque rather than in the open, a flexible system of priesthood rather than one based on inheritance or supernatural vocation, or the Moslem variants of marriage in the kindred have no particular utility. Indeed, worship in the village mosque tends to weaken the solidarity of the community which all other features of the social organization aim to uphold; while the inadequacy of the Moslem rules of widow marriage had to be corrected by a remodelling of the funeral customs.² Again, the Moslem funeral ceremonial fails to express the important social distinction between old age and youth.³ And the muddled pseudo-Islamic mythology is surely nothing but an incongruous, valueless 'addition'. All we can say about the appropriateness of these novel practices is that they conform to the rules of Islam; which is only repeating that Islam has in fact been adopted, with all these features, whether they have an ulterior purposefulness or not.

Logical consistency, even the interest in simulating it, is widely absent: think of the employment, by the Mohammedan sovereigns, of the *ndakó gboyá* cult; of the *navú* performed without any notion of fire; or of the preservation of the pagan marriages between grandmother and grandson by people otherwise consciously committed to Moslem practice.

Only on the plane of psychological effects is there a close and indeed convincing 'fit', the result, quite clearly, of selection and remodelling. Thus the mystic and ecstatic observances of Islam are absent; and the hectic, sexually excited mood of the *gani* or *navú* merely duplicates the mood formerly evoked in the *gunnu*. Integration, then, is complete only where it bears on the ethos of

¹ For the theoretical basis of this argument see my *Foundations of Social Anthropology*, 1951, pp. 384-5 *et seq.*

² See above, p. 122.

³ See above, pp. 129-30.

177 Nupe religion; but integration here means persistence, so that in the one instance in which the adoption of the new creed is truly not a mere 'addition' it also ceases to be a 'new thing'.
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It is hardly surprising that this 'fit' should apply to the emotional 'tone' of religion and should prove the tenacity of predispositions so deeply rooted in the personality. Even so, there can be no finality about it; this is only the picture as we see it today, and it is possible that further developments, or strains only slowly gathering weight, will bring a change here also. In a previous chapter I ventured a prediction of this kind.¹ Let me now add that traces of such a change are already visible. For the *navu* is more violent than the *gunnu* or any traditional rite used to be, and focuses its violence more sharply. Also, it was left to the new ceremonial to embody the 'licensed liberties' of joking relationship, which are otherwise played out privately and sporadically. As we remember, they are enacted mainly between the sexes and between boys and older men, and hence set aside respect, relationships and rules of etiquette normally scrupulously observed. Thus publicly staged, the 'licensed liberties' clearly provide a gratification sharper and more consciously aggressive than traditional usage could have afforded. Here, then, the greater political tensions in the city and the greater strain set up by changing moral standards seem to demand this more explosive relief: certainly, the older 'ethos' would not have condoned it.

¹ See above, p. 226.

771 divination). The belief in lucky or unlucky days and months is not really an exception; for the numerical order underlying their selection is neither systematic nor valid apart from this one context.

It is important, however, that the tendency to enumeration and schematic juxtapositions does not characterize the formulated doctrine alone ('There are four things in the world'); it is as typical of the way in which individuals express their own speculative and occasionally unorthodox views, for example—'There are two gods, one in the sky, the other on earth'; 'The female spirits live in the water, male spirits on the land.' Thus there is some interest in speculation, which is often keen and readily engaged in. But it relates only to the given topics of religion, that is, to notions already formulated, and does not attempt to break new ground. In other words, the people are content with a bare and fragmentary *Weltbild*, but feel the desire, though not for wider knowledge, yet for greater clarity in the knowledge they possess. In either case the treatment is schematic rather than syllogistic, and nominalistic in that it leans on the intelligibility of words and on semantic exercises.

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● 182 The religious knowledge so framed exhibits close consistency with other sectors of the culture. The non-anthropomorphic and abstract character of religion tallies with the non-realistic art of Nupe, and the emphasis on schematic arrangements in the former, with the geometrical-ornamental accent of the latter. Perhaps, too, there is a logical nexus between the unconcern with deities or humanized features of the universe and the absence of any drama proper (either in art or religion). The tendency to enumerations is visible also in Nupe folklore and in the Nupe calendar (where months are referred to by numbers). The same is true of status differences, political ranks, and age grades, which are always presented in schematic form and precisely numbered, even at the cost of inaccuracy; let me add that in a large number of communities the senior and politically important ranks number four. Nor are dichotomous arrangements less frequent; think only of the common juxtaposition of *Zĩsũ* ('town king') and *Zĩgĩ* ('town priest'). The dualism of the sexes, in particular, is carried to a considerable extent through Nupe language, which assigns a gender expressed by adding the attribute 'male' or 'female', also to trees and plants. The interest, finally, in analogies and semantic exercises is amply exemplified: in Nupe literature, where whole stories are based on puns or on the ambiguity of words; in attempts at producing persuasive pedigrees for present customs by means of etymological speculations; and in ordinary conversation.

These are all preferred ways of handling and ordering material (of whatever kind); and since they are visible both within and

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without the sphere of religion we may say of the latter that it is an expression (among others) of the basic intellectual orientation of the people. There is one exception, however. In the secular sphere the Nupe are keen historians, always interested in tracing things back to their past. In their religious conceptions this interest is almost entirely absent; so far as it exists, it ceases to be religious, being satisfied with summary references to extraneous, political-historical events, such as the introduction of a cult by Tsoede or the origin of some religious practice in the reign of a particular king. At this point the attitudes towards things sacred and profane diverge; only the latter require a precise time perspective; the former are simply given, or adequately explained by that timeless *ultima causa*, the deity.

To return for a moment to the Nupe bias for dualistic conceptions. Though we have grouped it with the other 'intellectual orientations', with predilection for enumerations, parables, and so forth, it clearly betrays more than this kind of predisposition, serving also to articulate the sharply felt and emotionally weighted antagonism of the sexes, as in witchcraft fantasies and in the belief in the deadly female 'germ' of the 'diseases of God'. And since the awareness of this antagonism springs from unconscious sources, it would seem to be of a different and more fundamental order than the other expressions of the dualistic bias. Shall we, then, hold the two apart? Even so, there remains the uniformly dualistic *Weltbild*, whether it expresses the unconscious sexual anxieties of men or their dispassionate intellectual efforts to order the phenomena of the world. Or shall we assume some play of cause and effect between the two, taking the awareness of sex antagonism to be at the root of the intellectual bias, in the sense that it shaped a predisposition towards finding dichotomies also in all other areas of experience? Clearly, we might equally assume the opposite, that is, that the conception of sex antagonism in witchcraft and elsewhere would not have crystallised had it not been facilitated by a congenial intellectual predisposition. There is, I think, no answer to these questions. The dualistic viewpoint is simply one of the cardinal possibilities upon which the human intellect can seize in structuring the world of experience; and the antagonism of male and female represents once more one of very few possibilities available to societies, or to man in society, in their efforts to structure the universe of human relationships. All we can legitimately say is that the two emerged together, in mutual consistency.

The witchcraft belief simply that other dichotomy, of 'good' and 'evil', as does the belief in spirits and in the character of humans inscrutably fashioned by God. But this dichotomy is formulated only on this cosmic scale, referring to the 'things that are in the

771 world', and has no narrower, pragmatic or ethical application. As
 182 for the realm of ethics, Nupe doctrine is altogether silent. It up-
 holds no ideal man, nor condemns his antithesis. There is no
 eschatology, no mythology exemplifying rights and wrongs, crime
 and retribution, and no promise of reward to the law-abiding. Nor
 is the formulated doctrine concerned with norms of action of more
 common currency, the simple rights and wrongs of everyday
 morality. 'Economic ethics' has its place in ritual; since this turns
 upon such things as birth, marriage and adolescence, crops and
 the exigencies of the seasons, prosperity and wealth, that is, upon
 events and conditions involving practical decisions, the respective
 courses of action are implicitly upheld as desirable, worthwhile
 and 'right'. But they are not 'announced' or 'revealed', neither
 commanded nor yet conspicuously dramatized. Their significance
 is left to preliminary knowledge, the worshippers knowing at the
 outset what to expect of the ritual, both as regards its aim and the
 promises it vouchsafes. And these are again silent on ethical issues.
 The fortunes anticipated and the misfortunes that may befall you
 imply neither merit nor punishment: they simply happen, while
 religion means no more than an aid in attaining or evading them.

[577] Only two explicit ethical commands occur in the whole range
 of Nupe rituals. They refer to filial obedience (enjoined in the
gunnu) and to the blessedness of fecundity. But we remember that
 the relevant episode of the *gunnu* is also the first to fall victim to
 change, and that other religiously sanctioned aids, the services of
 the *cigbeci*, are dispensed in disregard of the moral condemnation
 of childlessness. On balance, then, Nupe religion is amoral. As we
 anticipated, the crucial issue in most religions, how to reconcile
 the discrepancy of religious merit and practical rewards, simply
 does not arise. Nupe religion takes life as it is, offering no 'annun-
 ciations and promises' that would redress its iniquities, and hardly
 even endorsing the equity that should govern it.

This equity is largely left to the care of secular agencies alone.
 Religion plays a part only indirectly, through sanctioning the
 persons—kings, chiefs, executioners—who act as guardians of the
 accepted good. The sanction lies essentially in ritual, that is, in the
 various ceremonials involved in the assumption of these offices or
 entrusted to their holders. But let us note that these men guard,
 not really morality, but only that part of it which has solidified
 in the form of politically enforced law. Differently expressed, Nupe
 society knows mainly crimes and few 'sins', and only lawful, not
 saintly behaviour. On occasion religion abandons even this indirect
 support for the conventions of morality; for certain rituals deny
 these conventions, as in the sexual licence of the *gunnu* and *gani* or
 in the condonation of violence in the *navu*. At this point, then, the

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logical consistency between religion and the rest of social life ceases to be valid. Morally, the rituals in question have no message; or their message is a circuitous one, exemplifying the rule by the exception. Their 'competence' cannot therefore lie in this topsy-turvy picture of common morality: rather, as we already suggested, does it lie in the offer of explosive relief from normal constraints.

Let me say a little more on the amorality of the Nupe creed. Nupe religion, as we have seen, sanctions only the powers that be, the machinery of political control, and hence the claims of secular society to declare what is right and wrong. Religion by itself vouchsafes no direct and 'higher' assurance of this kind. It does not as it were speak for society, but only stands behind the appointed spokesmen. Needless to say, most religions go beyond this *carte blanche* for secular society. And in doing so they achieve two things: doubts and conflicts arising in mundane ethics can be resolved by the assurance that there are these other, 'higher' or 'eternal', values; and these can in turn serve as ideals which man is called upon to approach, however imperfectly. So that religion can both absorb the iniquities of human existence and give it an impetus towards making the world better than it is. Nupe religion can do neither. Thus conflicts over mundane ethics can be absorbed into religion only in the one province which itself proclaims the inevitability of conflicts, namely, in the hostile fantasies of witchcraft. And offering nothing 'higher' than an endorsement of mundane ethics, religion is emptied of its impetus towards world improvement: it is static, non-progressive, non-messianic, and once more content to take 'life as it is'.

3. RELIGION AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

There is a certain overlap between this new nexus and the one just discussed. For since any group, of whatever structure, is such only in virtue of the norms of acting enjoined upon its members, the pronouncements of religion upon 'right' and 'wrong' conduct (say, 'thou shalt honour thy father and mother') already serve to uphold the group so constituted (the family, or the society based upon filial piety). Yet there is that special competence of religion to uphold group existence and structure as such, and not only such specific manners of acting as may form the subject of ethical commands. Nor can group existence and group structure be 'commanded': they can only be demonstrated or circuitously affirmed, though occasionally they are explicitly asserted, as in Judaism with its tenet of a 'chosen people', serving a tribal or national God.

Again, Nupe religion lacks such explicit assertions, as it lacks

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771 also that conspicuous focus of group existence, a tribal god. There
 ● 182 is no conception that the deity is concerned with this one people
 only or that the Nupe people are the sole or chosen possessors of
 true religion. To be sure, there are the legends explaining how the
 Nupe acquired *cigbe*, the Chain of Tsoede, and particular rituals;
 but it is understood that other peoples also have medicines, rituals,
 and supernatural skills of various kinds. The Nupe tribe lays claim
 only to the possession of certain *particular* instances, not of the
genera ritual or medicine. Even so qualified, this claim or title
 becomes an aspect of group identity and hence one of the supports
 of the tribe's existence as a group. A similar possession of particular
 observances and sacred skills also identifies the groups of diverse
 or lesser inclusiveness: the state (which possesses the 'royal cults');
 the village community (which may possess a special *kuti*); and
 the kin group (which possesses hereditary *cigbe* and ancestral
 sacrifices.

This possession is adjusted even more finely, so that it comes to
 affirm, not only the corporate identity of this or that group, but
 also its internal structure. For as the administration of the village
kuti is vested in single kin groups but serves the whole community,
 so it endorses the make-up of a group in all other respects similarly
 segmented yet co-operative; and as the administration of kinship
 rituals falls to the senior man in the lineage and descends in that
 line but is meant to benefit also wives, mothers, daughters and
 sisters-in-law, so it endorses the basic kin group, the extended
 family or 'house'. All of which implications are contained in the
 Nupe conception of the 'ownership' of cults.

This ownership, though corporate, does not *make* the group in
 question; it pertains to groups already constituted as such by other
 criteria, whatever they may be—common language, territorial
 possession, citizenship, descent, cohabitation, and so forth. The
 possession of the religious observances is thus a feature of group
 identity only in combination with all the others and in fact pre-
 supposes them. This relationship is reversed only once, in the case
 of the Nupe emigrants whose title to 'Nupedom' rests solely on
 the retention of the traditional cults.

The Nupe congregation, in the wider or narrower sense, is such
 inevitably, mainly by descent, and not by individual choice, as is
 the case in a 'church' open to all comers. Fundamentally, this is a
 closed religion, bound up with membership of tribe, nation, village
 or kin group, and part of the 'estate' of these groups. In a few
 instances—most (not all) *cigbe*, divination, the unimportant sacri-
 fices to spirits—the benefits of religion are accessible to individuals
qua individuals, even to strangers from other tribes. In all other
 respects individuals share in the ministrations of religion only in

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virtue of their membership of the respective groups, and share in them on equal terms. For there are no qualifications which might make one unpredictably a vessel of divine grace, nor degrees of sacredness attainable by personal endeavour. The miraculous birth of the *gunnu* priest comes closest to the former conception; while the technical skills of *igbe* and the *ndakó gboyá* society with its open recruitment at least enable individuals so inclined to become active agents of the supernatural. Even so, these are not qualifications for religious excellence nor calls for spiritual leadership. The Nupe congregation has equal access to grace and blessings; it knows no spiritual leaders or chosen vessels: it is a 'mass', not a 'virtuoso' religion.

But consider that secular life, with its ranks and status differences, is governed by precisely these notions of individual effort after excellence and of unequal access to existing benefits. In a sense, then, the ideals of secular and religious life are opposed to one another. Yet if they were not thus opposed, if effort after excellence held good in the religious congregation as much as it does in the mundane society, the diverse achievements might easily clash and lead to divided leadership. As it is, this cannot happen. One of the results is that Nupe religion, unlike other creeds, is incapable of compensating the failures of secular ambition with the promise of spiritual success or exaltation; another, that religion can achieve that other competence, of fully supporting 'mundane ethics'. It need not have been so. The egalitarianism of this 'mass religion' might have meant the promise, and hence that other 'compensation', of equality before God, as against the inequalities of which Nupe life is full. But this potentiality is left unexploited. In so far as Nupe religion deviates from the values governing secular life, it does so with insufficient emphasis to carry such a message of hope; indeed, the message it might have carried would be belied by too many other features of the creed and manner of worship.

We have so far considered the 'congregation' in the wider sense, as a community possessing such-and-such observances and means of communing with the supernatural. Understood as a collection of individuals worshipping together, the congregation again endorses or upholds the relevant groups existing within the society, now through mobilizing them in the act of worship. The tribe is not a congregation in this narrower sense, and the nation becomes one only intermittently and partially; but the presence of these inclusive groups is recalled in the prayer formulae which mention the ancestor king Tsoede and on occasion call divine blessing upon 'the whole land of Nupe'. The village community is invariably a congregation-in-worship (and is mentioned in the prayer), as is

771 also the kin group, in the different kinship ceremonials. As for
 182 individuals, they may by themselves solicit the more technical
 supernatural aids; but there is no true worship by individuals,
 only worship in groups or, in solitary sacrifices and the like, on
 behalf of groups.

The congregation-in-worship, over and above mobilizing a particular group, also mobilizes it in such manner that its internal structure is thrown into relief. We recall such features as the 'inner circle' of worshippers, composed of mature men; the roles of officiants, vested in titled elders or family heads; the precedence of rank, observed in the communal meal; the subordinate tasks assigned to adolescents, the obedience demanded of them, and the partial exclusion of women and strangers. The arrangement of the congregation, then, mirrors the status arrangements meant to be valid in mundane society, so that the latter is demonstrated so-so-speak, in model form, dramatized, and endorsed by the sacred context.

We note again that religion has no message of its own, transcending or reversing the secular norms: there is no preaching of, say, 'the first shall be last'. Even the festivals of youth, *gani* and *navu*, though they grant to the adolescents a freedom and initiative not normally enjoyed, also exemplify in various ways respect for rank and loyalty to political leadership. Nor does religious practice cancel that paramount factor in secular society, wealth: we remember the cost of rituals (communal or kinship) and of supernatural aids privately solicited, which causes the former to vary in scale with available means and may make the latter inaccessible to the poor. This point is important since one feature of ritual procedure may seem to indicate a reversal of the secular ideal. I am referring to the uniform, simple dress obligatory in the pagan rites, which thus excludes the visible tokens of wealth from the circle of worshippers. It was left to the Moslem ceremonials with their chances for display to remove this egalitarian touch. But it is only a touch and no more, representing no effective symbolism; for the people do not derive any message or moral from it but regard it merely as a ritual rule among others, meant to draw the line between sacred and profane occasions.

Let us therefore call Nupe religion conservative, non-revolutionary, and again, non-messianic. Only in one respect does the congregation fail to 'mirror' social reality correctly, in that it upholds a subordinate position of the women which is not true in real life. For the men, religious practice thus expresses an ideal frustrated in every-day experience. But in this one sphere of conflict where religion no longer endorses 'life as it is', it is also incapable of contenting the believers, forcing them to resort to the fantasies

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about female witches and to the vicarious satisfaction of witch-hunting. Nupe religion, we must conclude, cannot hold its own as a messenger of ideals.

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4. ASSURANCE AND STIMULATION

We have already mentioned the circular efficacy linking these two components of religious experience. Yet they can be separated in analysis, as much (or as little) as the mere knowing and learning of religious truths can be held apart from the actual living through acts of devotion.

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Concerning the assurances about the world and man's place in it which can be known and learned, there is little to say, and most that can be said is negative. Nupe doctrine does not teach that the universe is benevolent or that the deity is closely concerned with human fate. Though man has skills and ritual procedures to invoke supernatural aid, their outcome will often remain uncertain. Thus these skills and procedures contain only traces of the calculable forcefulness of 'magic'. The strictly technical manipulations of *cigbe* come closest to this conception; yet they, too, are subject to the will of God, or accident, and even the miraculous medicines in which one places absolute confidence involve 'invocations' (not 'spells') and hence an element of submission. In the last resort, man can only appeal and supplicate; if, on balance, Nupe religion is optimistic, this only means that it holds out hopes in the face of a world governed by accident, not that there is an assured or reassuring design behind it.

To turn to the 'stimulations'. We need not stress again that the self-abandonment of the mystic or visionary is utterly foreign to the Nupe. Never does the worshipper face his god in solitude, drawing only upon his inward experience or seeking private illumination. Nor is the mood he seeks in his worship entirely religious, that is, unattainable save through the 'thought of supernatural relations'; for in all the major rites at least, that mood emerges also from the added stimuli of music, dancing, crowd behaviour, and perhaps sexual excitement. Generally, the mood of Nupe worship is restrained and calm, leading to no extremes either of fear and stress or of exultation. The absence of elaborate ritualism precludes the tensions that go with rigidly prescribed gestures or speech; in avoiding nocturnal performances most rituals also avoid the sharp accents of fear and mystery; and the rules of ritual etiquette usually curb abandoned behaviour.

Above all, the mood of Nupe worship lacks development. The ritual prepares and holds a sense of the sacred in various, familiar ways—through rules marking off the ritual occasion from ordinary

771 ones; through the subdued, solemn manner of applying oneself to
 781 the ritual task; and through the serious import of the supplication.
 182 But this mood is merely 'lived through'; it involves no mounting
 expectancy, pressing for some culminating experience or final fulfilment. In the act of worship proper, embodied in the esoteric phase of any rite, the prayer or the sacrificial meal might play that part. Intellectually, the prayer represents the crucial moment, when the whole purpose of the ritual is made clear and the appeal or hope articulately expressed. In the large-scale ceremonials, too, there is some emotional preparation for that moment, drumming and singing being abruptly silenced when the prayer is about to be uttered. Yet it is uttered too early in the proceedings and uttered too informally to come as a culminating stage. The sacrificial meal stands out in that it concludes the act of worship proper; but just then the solemn mood is also visibly fading.

The movable rites and minor observances; consisting as they do only of prayer and sacrifice, do not progress beyond that short-lived 'sensing of the sacred'. And if the great ceremonials offer further excitements and something akin to a final climax, these no longer grow out of the awareness of transcendental events, but are achieved through the massed stimuli of more common appeal—music, dancing, and so forth. As I suggested in an earlier context, some anticipation of the final stimulations must fuse with the mood of the worship proper; as the congregation in turn retains some sense of the sacred even in the phase of the 'merry-making', though in the absence of elaborate symbols acting as 'reminders' that sense is none too secure. What is important is that the worship as such does not work up to any final 'fulfilment'; rather, the emotional tensions remain diffuse and without climax. They only sensitize the congregation to the 'annunciations and promises' voiced in the ritual but do not prepare the worshippers for revelations.

The bush vigil in the *gunnu* may seem an exception since here certain pronouncements are made to a congregation previously exposed to fear and the thrills of mystery. But again, this is not a true climax of religious experience; this episode is only a prelude to the actual rite (and can in fact be omitted); while the pronouncement is concerned with nothing more momentous than an admonishment of adolescents. Indeed, the very mood of fear and mystery, which would seem so congenial to the expectancy of revelations, must be called exceptional. One other ritual, the *manma*, is staged in a similar atmosphere; but it occurs only in a few communities and is performed with little excitement or awe; nor does it carry any message or 'annunciation'.

Another exception is more important. In each Nupe community the calm and restrained mood of worship is reversed once, in the

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abandoned excitement of one or the other of the three ceremonials *gunnu*, *gani* and *navu*. This break in the 'ethos' of Nupe religion carries its own explanation; for it is understood as a licence, setting aside normally valid and precisely named controls—of sex and of physical violence against political opponents. Here, then, impulses repressed in secular life are compensated, and tensions generated through the repression, offered explosive, or 'cathartic', release. Religion, in providing these outlets (on circumscribed occasions), anticipates as well as canalizes the working of psychological mechanisms, which might otherwise operate in random fashion or beyond the control of the society, in the 'private worlds' of neuroses and psychopathic fantasies.¹

Probably no society is free from some such repressions. In Nupe, they are clearly traceable. The 'ethos' of Nupe life is again generally calm and restrained; but in some measure it is only meant to appear so. That it also conceals deep anxieties and tensions is shown by the witchcraft fantasies, which belie the acquiescence so often typical of the overt relationship between the sexes. And in one sphere of social life, in political ambition, passions and anxieties come to the surface. Consider, however, that this intense political rivalry is itself an instance of 'constraint', imposed as it is by the rigid class society. Indeed, it is doubly 'constrained'; for the passions here aroused are not permitted free play, as they might in some kind of jungle ethics, but are hemmed in by an intricate code of etiquette imposing semblance of gentility and acquiescence. We must conclude, then, that the uneven mood of Nupe religion indicates an 'ethos' kept calm and unexcited through those circumscribed chances of unrestraint. In other words, while certain facts of worship express the calmness meant to govern mundane life, others make it possible, through absorbing its disturbances into their own explosive mood. As we know, the balance is imperfect; there are the sudden outbursts of political passion when pent-up tensions find 'random' relief, as well as escapes into neurosis. Let us note a further point. One familiar 'compensation', in the form of fantasies about a golden age or a promised millennium, is entirely absent in Nupe religion. The Nupe attempt to resolve the 'uneasiness' of reality not in ideological fashion but, as I put it before, by the 'sheer dynamics' of repressions lifted and emotional tensions relieved.

Here we are already touching upon the fusion of 'assurance' and 'stimulation'. It occurs, briefly, when 'living through' the acts of worship leaves some lasting effect upon the individual's attitude towards the world around him: the cathartic relief of the few hectic rituals implies precisely this. Yet the effect is diffuse and in

¹ See my *Foundations*, p. 356.

771 a sense crude, containing no intellectual insight or gain; nor per-
 182 haps is the gain a lasting one. In a cruder form still, much the same
 change is entailed in any exciting or pleasurable interruption of
 workaday routine and in the consequent readiness for further
 work; which effect, too, must be ascribed to the Nupe ceremonials
 and festivities. But clearly, the fusion of 'stimulation' and 'assur-
 ance' can operate also on a higher, that is, more conscious, plane.
 It is in this sense that theologians think of the access of faith or
 fortitude entailed in acts of worship and William James speaks of
 the 'assurance of safety' and the 'new zest which adds itself like
 a gift to life'.¹

Undoubtedly, this is true also of Nupe religion, even though its
 acts of worship are without precise revelations and merely voice
 hopes impressive only because they are reinforced by diffuse ex-
 citements. Yet if we grant this access of faith, we must grant also
 that it will have to prevail against difficulties, failures and dis-
 appointments. Acts of worship, therefore, both build up faith and
 draw upon it. Somewhat differently expressed, we have made this
 point in an earlier context; there, too, we suggested that only the
 fixed rituals, whose aims are fundamentally unspecific and whose
 design brings into play all the more stirring stimulations, can
 assume the former role; while the movable rites and all the other
 contingent observances, being prosaic and meant to be successful
 in specific needs, apply faith and draw upon it as much as, for-
 tuitously, they may strengthen it.² Let me add this observation
 only. The fixed rituals, though they engender faith, are not meant
 to be repeated or changed for the sake of greater efficacy. They
 are prescribed occasions when man can commune with the deity
 and touch divine power, and through this alone a source of assur-
 ance. Also, their number is small, so that Nupe life is not punc-
 tuated with occasions creative of faith. Here, then, we meet with
 something like an economy of faith which seems to have found its
 own level.

In other religions this economy may work differently. Certainly,
 it seems to work in Nupe, where it goes together with an unam-
 bitious doctrine allowing for the failure of specific appeals and
 upholding no firm over-all assurance. For by and large, the tenor
 of Nupe life is optimistic; nor are there any instances of individuals
 turning cynics or being driven into unbelief by disappointed hopes.
 Does this mean that the zest and assurance evoked in the acts of
 worship (but tempered and hence protected by the cautious doc-
 trine) are sufficient to endure and pervade all the efforts of prac-
 tical life? or only that religious experience is not meant to be
 enduring and pervasive?

¹ Op cit., pp. 403-4.

² See above, pp. 103-6.

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We cannot precisely measure this psychological aftermath of acts of worship. But we can assess it indirectly, from the concern with religious experiences visible in everyday life. And here it is quite clear that our second assumption is the correct one. For the acts of worship do not leave any vivid awareness of the achieved communion with the deity nor any lasting sense of the holy. There is nothing of 'religiosity' in the Nupe character. He knows, of course, at all times, that there is a God and a realm of the supernatural; but ordinarily this is tacit knowledge, of no practical relevance, neither permanently awe-inspiring nor permanently exhilarating. Crudely speaking, the Nupe are religious only on religious occasions; in between, life is an affair of secular values and rules-of-thumb. That even sacred places are 'sacred' only at certain times of the year is part of the same attitude; so is the absence of any conception of personal holiness. Even Islam, with its daily prayers, its Friday service, and its pious scholars, has hardly affected this attitude. For the daily prayers have become unthinking routine, without any touch of the mystic; being a mallam is a profession among others and often combined with them; and the Moslem cult of saints or 'holy men' found no response.

All this means that the spheres of religion and the profane remain clearly separable. Probably few religions merge completely with secular life so that every possible action bears some reference to transcendental notions. Nor, of course, can we conceive of religions which would at no point coincide with mundane interests. But the border zone between the two can be more or less wide and more or less sharply circumscribed. In Nupe, this zone is narrow and sharply outlined. Wherever the 'competences' of religion bear on mundane interests we can readily mark the point where the coincidence ceases. There is no 'carry-over' from one to the other. Thus religion sustains the offices of chiefs, kings, and other exponents of authority and law: but their person is not sacred, and criminals convicted by these holders of supernaturally sanctioned offices are not treated with any show of awe or sacred horror. Religion helps to bind together the kin group through the belief in reincarnation, through ancestral sacrifices, and through the solemnization of marriage and birth: but the Nupe do not, on normal occasions, speak the names of the ancestors with bated breath or constantly worry about placating their spirits. Marriage is in no sense sacred, and children are not holy; even children whose birth is ascribed to the efficacy of sacrifice are not treated in any special way.¹ Nor, finally, are the sick who recover with supernatural aid or the crops that thrive after some rite has been duly

¹ The only rules of this kind are entailed in the sogbs cult, of alien origin.

performed subject to special taboos or other rules meant to recall the divine intervention.

Nupe religion, then, has a defined place in the scheme of things. It is not that scheme itself, embracing or giving meaning to all other things with which human life is concerned. If religion engenders assurance and optimism, human life yet relies equally on the assurance and confidence that go with rational skills and mundane experiences. This is hardly unexpected. A religion which provides no *Weltbild*; which keeps aloof from moral judgments; which upholds no messianic ideals; and which rejects the incalculable revelations of mystics, is also a religion content with its own province. That province still 'supplements' or completes all the others and 'transcends' whatever they offer in the way of rational understanding, practical measures, and exhilarating or reassuring experiences. But this careful fit of a province among others, even though it completes their series on a higher, transcendental plane, has something of the rational. It savours of some plan of giving unto religion only what is hers, by some right that can be reasoned out. Perhaps we should say that Nupe religion is as rational as religion can be.

But this is, in religion, not a golden mean. The Nupe case does not prove that a religion thus rationally tempered saves the believers from disturbing doubts or cosmic fears just because its claims and promises are so unambitious. Nupe religion may well aim to be a sort of Plutarchian creed, steering a middle course between unbelief and too much belief, where man neither 'directeth and opposeth all his complaints and lamentations against fortune and casuality', nor yet 'will think and say that every disease and infirmity of his body, all his losses . . . and his repulses and disgraces are so many plagues inflicted upon him by the ire of the gods and the very assaults of divine justice.'¹ But in thinking neither wholly one thing nor wholly the other, the Nupe yet invite one sharp repulse to their mood of optimism: for they know the deep fear of witchcraft. And this is not, in their case, a fear of the consequences of impiety or of 'divine justice'; rather is it born of the awareness that the universe is inadequately controlled, and hence that the province of religion is too narrow.

¹ Plutarch, 'Of Superstition'; *Moralia*, translated by Philemon Holland, 1911 edition, p. 380.

LEGAL PROCEDURE

627 The village head has limited and informal judicial powers. Minor cases are settled by him with two or three members of the council and the elders of the ward to which the litigant belongs. The procedure is informal and discussion rarely becomes heated. The authority of these courts is gradually being surrendered to the officially recognized courts. Cases requiring formal justice are referred to the

671 Native Court under the professional Moslem judge (*Alkahi*) of the District.

692 In modern Nupe, Moslem law is paramount; the judges (pl. *Alkalis*) reside in Bida and the other Districts. The Bida town court is both a local court and appeal court for the Districts. The *Etsu* and his councillors form a higher court of appeal for cases concerned with land.

671 A marked disparity has been reported between Moslem law and the traditional
182 culture, particularly in rural communities, where the social and economic conditions differ most widely from the social life of which Moslem law is an expression. Peasants who were familiar with and understood the old customary law, often insist, when they come before the courts, on being accompanied by a mallam or person of standing who is familiar with the "new" law.

Among the Kyedye the *Alkahi* holds his court in Muregi; the *Kuta* (chief) and delegates (district heads) have no judicial authority.

692 Jurisdiction over grave crimes was formerly the responsibility of the *Etsu*
696 Nupe. The death penalty was exacted for theft in the night, "big theft," murder, and treason. Traditionally the only villages in which executions could be performed were the *ledu* (pl. *leduzhi*) villages—Jebba, Gbere, Tada, Jiragi, Sulati, Fofa, Taiji, and Cewuru, which lie along the banks of the Niger 10 to 15 miles apart, between Jebba in the north and Egan in the south. The king's hangmen resided here and a criminal was generally taken for execution to the *ledu* village nearest to his home.

773 Each of these villages possesses a "chain of Tsode," generally kept at the
782 thief's house; it is a typical heavy iron slave or prison chain, up to 30 ft. long, with arm- and leg-irons. Traditional sacrifices of beer and blood are made to it, and it protects the village from sickness and brings fertility to women. Jebba and Tada, the oldest of the *leduzhi*, also possess bronze figures.²⁷

INHERITANCE

428 The personal property of men is inherited by their sons, that of women by their daughters. The family farm goes to the relative next in seniority, younger brother or eldest son, in the classificatory sense.²⁸

586 A widow may be inherited by her husband's sister's son or her husband's younger brother; custom forbids remarriage with an elder brother. Islam, however, allows remarriage with elder or younger brother.²⁹

LAND TENURE

423 Land tenure in different parts of the country has been variously affected by two factors, namely the appropriation as estates held by the nobility of parts of the tribal lands after the Fulani conquest, and the density of population.

The royal house of Bida holds the title to certain lands by right of conquest. Land was also bestowed on others by the royal house for services rendered, and all individual titles to land are held to be ultimately derived from this one source. The clearing and first hoeing of the royal estates is done by large-scale communal labour. The subsequent work was formerly done by slaves, but to-day by paid labour.

Most of the appropriation of land occurred in the area east of the Kaduna River. Here population is more dense and there is a complex system of land ownership and transfer. Owing to the consequent shortage, disputes are frequent and particu-

²⁷ Nadel, 1942, pp. 56-6, 165-70; 1940a, p. 181; 1935b.

²⁸ Nadel, 1942, pp. 31-2, 245.

²⁹ Nadel, 1954a, pp. 249-50.

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weight to it in that they coincide with, and are interpreted in the sense of, distinctions implying social gradation. 634
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On the top of the social structure, we have the hereditary ruling class formed by the chief's family group, and below it the second stratum, which comprises the Kede of common status. Though the latter exercise no direct influence upon the policy of the State, they can yet in certain respects range themselves beside the ruling class: if the members of the ruling class decide the fate of the country and derive the main benefits from all political exploits, war or peaceful acquisition of territory—the Kede commoners take an active part in all activities on a tribal scale, even bearing the brunt in the most significant activity, colonization, and benefit to a considerable extent from the political successes of their rulers. Indirectly, by attaching themselves in subservient position to the households and factions of the ruling class, they attain a larger measure of political influence and certain economic advantages not warranted by their hereditary status. Moreover, their racial and cultural affinity with the class above, and the proportionate remoteness from the lowest class beneath, place the Kede commoners on one plane with the ruling group of the country. The lowest stratum comprises the 'original inhabitants', whom tradition paints as having been the subjects of the Kede from mythical times and having had no culture worth mentioning before the advent of the Kede. In fact, they are still, seen with Kede eyes, a 'primitive' and slightly contemptible group; they fail by the cultural standards which the Kede recognize, being pagans, inferior canoe-men, and relatively poor. They were excluded from the tribal activities of the Kede and all benefits accruing from them; yet they suffered more than the other groups from the failures of their rulers' policy, unsuccessful wars or revolts, for their country might become the battle-field and their farms and villages be destroyed, while, unlike the ruling classes, they had no reward to expect in the event of success.

The question arises by what machinery the Kede maintained this rigid division into hereditary classes, kept intact the solidarity of their small minority, yet were able at the same time to integrate and bind to loyalty the heterogeneous sections of their State.¹ Our 634
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¹ The strong bond of loyalty that existed between the Kede and their subject groups is illustrated in the historical fact that in the Katcha War certain *hintsoyi* groups fought on the side of the Kede against the Emir of Bida.

634 examination of the political organization has revealed one such
565 machinery: the machinery of coercion. We must ask now how
182 far other, non-political, forms of integration lend their support,
or possibly are made to lend it, to political unification. We can
distinguish three types of such supporting integrative agencies: (1)
integration through actual co-operation between the sections of
the population; (2) integration in the spiritual sphere—in other
words, through ideologies teaching or preaching unity; (3) in-
tegration based on both. Instances of the first type are economic
co-operation and community life, of the second, tradition and
mythology, and of the third, religious practice.

VIII. Integrative Mechanisms

634 *Economic Co-operation and Community Life.* The propinquity of
182 the Kede and *kintsozi* settlements, combined with the difference
439 in their productive system, invites a certain measure of co-operation
in the economic field. The Kede buy farm-produce from
their peasant neighbours, who, in turn, use to some extent Kede
transport to dispose of their surplus on the large river markets.
This co-operation is by no means exclusive and does not lead to
complete dependence upon each other. The peasants also sell
some of their farm-produce inland or take their fish directly, on
their own canoes, to riverside markets; similarly the Kede buy a
certain amount of their food on the various outside markets which
they visit on their river voyages.

621 In their community life, the two groups hardly achieve a more
182 intensive, or less casual, co-operation. The difference in occupa-
634 tion and in the main interests of their lives is not balanced by any
other strong ties. The young folk of the Kede and *kintsozi*
frequently join in each other's dances; here and there friendships
are struck between individuals from the two groups. But apart
from these contacts the two sections keep to themselves. The age-
grade associations do not stretch across the tribal boundary and,
above all, there is almost no inter-marriage: the *kintsozi* arrange
their marriages with their tribal relations inland, and the Kede
marry among themselves.¹ In these marriages between Kede
[552] villages distance plays no part, which is rather significant, for the
182 (inland) Nupe generally dislike marriages between distant places.

¹ This is true of all the older Kede settlements; in the more recent settle-
ments (e.g. Katcha) I found a few cases of inter-marriage with the *kintsozi*.

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The various Kede groups are thus all related, not only, rather vaguely, by common descent, being all emigrants of common stock, but also very concretely, by repeated inter-marriage. Personal contact between fellow tribesmen, friends, and relations among the Kede, whatever the distance of their habitations, is maintained by occasional visits, and revived regularly every trading season, when the Kede canoes travel from place to place. Finally, the solidarity of the Kede community is strengthened periodically, when new groups of immigrants come out from 'home' to join fellow tribesmen who have emigrated earlier in their 'colony'.

Tradition and Mythology. The Kede share their traditions with their mother tribe, and, like the Nupe, trace their origin back to the mythical Tsoede or Edegi, of whom we have heard already (see p. 175). This Tsoede is said to have been a Nupe man who lived about 1400, and who was sent as slave to Idah, to which country Nupe was tributary at that time. He won the favour of the King of Idah, so much so that he evoked the jealousy of the sons of the king, and eventually had to flee the country. He set out in a bronze canoe, loaded with gifts from the king and manned by other Nupe slaves, to return to his country and to make himself king there, the rule of Nupe having been the King of Idah's parting gift to his favourite. On his flight to Nupe, Tsoede was helped by two men whom he met on the river—one sitting on a stone in midstream (*kuta*),¹ and one fishing with a fish trap (*ekpā*). When Tsoede established himself as King of Nupe he rewarded these two men by making them chief over the whole river and its tribes (*Kuta*), and a high rank-holder in the new river State (*Ekpā*), respectively.² These men were the ancestors of the present Kede, and the first to exercise the 'Rule over the Water', which has remained in the possession of the Kede since.

It clearly does not come within the compass of the present study to examine how far these legendary data might contain a kernel of historical truth. Their importance to us lies rather in the sociological significance of the 'truth' which they announce—that

¹ *Kuta*, stone, seems to be an old form of Nupe; it occurs in two obsolete Nupe dialects, and also in Gbari, a related language. The modern Nupe word for stone is *takē* (the syllables of *kuta* reversed).

² The Nupe are very fond of such puns. There exists another version of this legend which derives the title *Kuta* from the fact that the man on the stone was wearing two gowns 'on top of each other'—in Nupe, *ku ta dogi*.

634 is, in the influence upon actual social life which the belief in this
 182 'truth' entails. The Kede tradition of origin, as we have seen,
 173 concerns itself above all with the beginnings of the political history
 of the tribe. In the fashion of such myths of origin, it anchors
 the existing system in a dim past, which, by its very remoteness
 and its supernatural and sacred associations, endows the present
 with an immensely convincing validity. The Kede tradition of
 origin ranges its strongest spiritual support behind what we now
 recognize to be the two fundamental features of their political
 system: the fact that the extent of Kede rule is defined on the
 basis of locality, and not tribe, and the fact that, within the larger
 political unit of Nupe kingdom, the Kede claim a semi-autonomous
 position. Let me emphasize that the knowledge of this tradition
 is not limited to the Kede, but is common to all Nupe sections,
 and among them the various *kintsozi* groups. The common
 possession of the myth represents a spiritual link of utmost
 importance: for with the myth the subjects of the Kede also
 accept the system which it is meant to guarantee—the overlordship
 of the Kede.

634 Religion. As I have mentioned, the Kede are to-day Moham-
 771 medans—very eager Mohammedans, in fact. In many settlements
 184 you will find *mallams* teaching the Koran to boys and adults, often
 182 pupils who are able to attend the classes only when their travels
 happen to take them to this place and allow them a short sojourn.
 The *kintsozi*, on the other hand, are still largely pagans. More-
 over, against the solid religious unity of the Kede, the *kintsozi*
 show a certain diversity of religious rites and beliefs, which reflects
 the composite nature of this group.¹ However, there exist two
 rituals, both essentially river rituals, which are common to all the
 semi-riverain groups, and a third ritual, linked with the memory
 of Tsoede, which exists in all the larger riverain (and partly also
 inland) villages of Nupe. The first of these rituals is the *Ndáduma*
 (the Nupe name for the River Niger), an annual sacrifice to the
 spirits of the river, performed in all the different river villages

¹ We cannot say what the religious situation in the river valley has been in the earlier periods of Nupe history. The probability is that the Kede, as most Nupe sub-tribes, possessed certain special rites and beliefs, which were not shared by the other tribal groups. The characteristic difference between Kede and *kintsozi* to-day, between a solid religious unit on one side and a heterogeneous religious group on the other, would thus have been equally marked in the pre-Islamic era.

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and believed to procure, and at the same time to keep within limits, the annual flooding of the Niger. The second ritual is the *Ketsd*, a sacrifice to the spirit of the huge rock of the same name which rises abruptly from midstream near Jebba (known to Europeans as Juju-rock); this sacrifice is believed to cure illness and barrenness and to secure luck in fishing or trade. The third ritual is the sacrifice to the *Chain of Tsoede*, a sacred relic which secures fertility, prevents illness, and is also used as an instrument of ordeal.

Now, these three rituals also occur among the Kede; the first two have in fact been, as it were, usurped by them, and made to some extent their own concern. The Kede chief holds himself responsible for certain special, most conspicuous, performances of these river ceremonies. Once a year a special *Ndduma* is performed in a place called Bazumagi, north of Jebba, the *Kuta* himself providing the sacrificial food, a white bull and honey. Unlike the local *Ndduma* rituals, the *Ndduma* of Bazumagi is enacted on behalf, not of a particular village, but of the whole population of the river valley. The chief's *Ndduma* also shows another feature which is absent in the local rite: the priest climbs a rock in midstream and throws a stone towards the bank; the spot where the stone falls is believed to mark the line to which the river will rise that year. The *Ketsd* becomes a chief's ritual at the appointment of a new *Kuta*. About one month after his accession the new chief sends a bull (preferably white) to Jebba Island to be sacrificed there by the local priest, again on behalf of the whole riverain community, to inaugurate and secure a prosperous reign. A special *Chain of Tsoede* finally is kept in Muregi, in the house of one of the chief's councillors (see p. 176). He performs the annual sacrifice of beer and the blood of a sheep, beer and animal being again provided by the *Kuta* himself.

It is interesting to note that in none of these rituals may the *Kuta* or any member of his family be present. Thus the double nature of these rites, which, though stamped chief's rituals, are essentially rituals of the *hintsozi*, is conspicuously symbolized. The interests which they voice—the securing of safety and livelihood to the people on the river—are adopted and made their own by the Kede rulers. A single belief and a common cult comprise both rulers and ruled, notwithstanding the religious barriers which otherwise separate the two, and add to the political dependence of the *hintsozi* another, spiritual, dependence.

634 *Conclusions.* We may say then, in conclusion, that economic
162 co-operation and community life only underline the political and
tribal divisions which cut across Kede society. As integrative
forces which could foster a solidarity pertaining to the political
system at large, they fail. Only the ideological influences, myth
and religion, succeed in this. They anchor the external political
unit in more deeply rooted interests and sentiments. They add
to political coercion the more subtle persuasion of supernatural
arguments, of beliefs in the necessity and fore-ordination of the
existing system.

634 I have been using the present tense with some liberty. It was
177 applied correctly if we are thinking of the last ten or fifteen years,
182 but inaccurately if we consider the immediate present and, above
all, the future. The rite of the *Chain of Tsoede* is still performed
annually, in completely Mohammedanized Muregi. The bull
sacrifice at the *Ketsá* was performed when the present *Kuta*
succeeded to the chieftainship; whether it will be repeated for
his successor is open to doubt. The *Ndduma*, at any rate, although
still existing as a local rite, is no longer carried out by the Kede
chief. We have spoken before of the decline of authority of the
Kede chief. It may seem surprising that a chieftainship which
had been forced to give up most of the qualities from which it
formerly drew its strength should so easily discard these 'binding
forces' of religion. The explanation lies, again, in the changed
conception of Kede chieftainship. Kede rule has exchanged its
dynamic and expanding nature for the secure, acquiescent authority
under the Pax Britannica. It can dispense with the binding forces
of religion, which used to uphold the autocratic rulership of a
small minority; it can, above all, afford to discontinue a practice
which, to the Mohammedan chiefs of Kede country, appears as
a concession to their less enlightened subjects. Kede rule has thus
paradoxically weakened itself in its new-found security. And in
this the chiefs of Kede do not stand alone; this paradox is, I believe,
a not uncommon feature of modern, static, Government-backed
chieftainship in Africa.

The incipient dissolution of the 'binding force' of religion in the
Kede State is only following in the wake of the general dissolution
of the solidarity which it was meant to uphold. The economic
development of the country led, as we have seen, to an extensive
co-operation with outside groups and to the founding of colonies

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in areas to which political rule could never be expected to follow. ⁶³⁴
Common interests and culture, community life, intermarriage ¹⁷⁷
stretch as far as these outposts. Moreover, cultural assimilation ¹⁸²
and intensified contact have removed some of the barriers which
formerly separated the Kede from neighbouring groups. The facts
of common culture, economic co-operation, and community life
thus no longer converge to cement the solidarity of a ruling group,
but merely outline the much vaguer unit of a scattered ethnic
group which has abandoned all claims to political self-realization.

IX. *The Evolution of the Kede State*

Our examination of the Kede State and its history does neither ⁶³⁴
support nor refute the theory of the origin of the State which, ²¹
accepted to-day by many students of society, derives every State
organization from an original invasion and eventual conquest of
one ethnic group by another.¹ Our data have shown political
domination of one ethnic group by another to be a factor of para-
mount importance; they also revealed the occurrence of clash and
conquest—though not on the comprehensive scale implied in this
theory of the State; but they do not prove an original group
invasion, beyond that which we must relegate to the era of
mythical and thus unverifiable events. Our data can, in fact, also
be taken as evidence for an 'internal diversification'² and a gradual
emergence to political supremacy of one out of a number of ethnic
groups.

Our data relating to Kede expansion in recent times, on the
other hand, tend to confirm another sociological theory which
concerns itself with social origins—namely, the theory which holds
that migration and colonization are never a result of over-popula-
tion, but rather an expression of that 'spirit of hope' and 'enter-
prise' which is absent in countries with over-population.³ Can we
accept this description of the growing Kede society as a final state-
ment? Is the emergence of a tribal section to a dominant political
role fully explained by this reference to psychological charac-
teristics?

Our analysis of Kede political organization has emphasized a
somewhat different aspect; it outlined the political system in its

¹ See F. Oppenheimer, *op. cit.*

² R. Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

³ A. M. Carr-Saunders, *The Population Problem* (1922), pp. 299 ff.